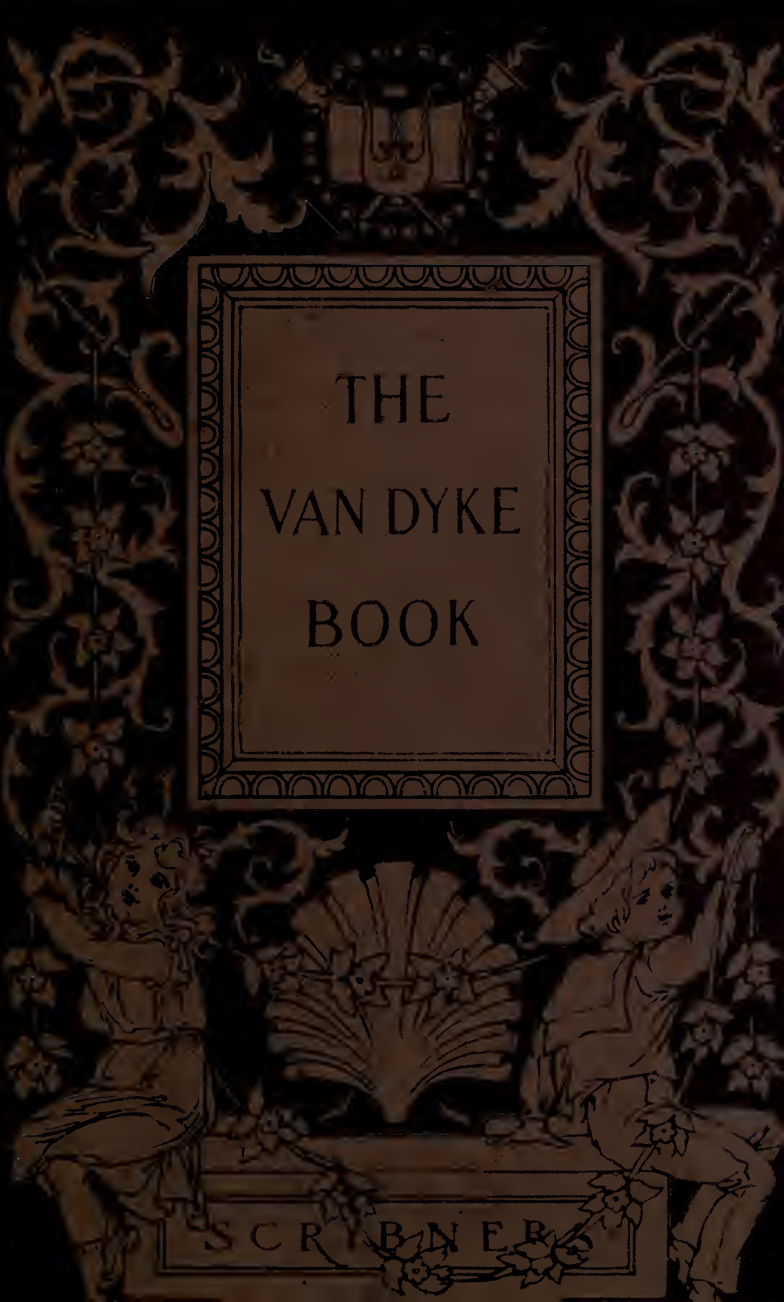
THE VAN DYKE BOOK



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THE VAN DYKE BOOK

Faithfully Yours
Henry van Dyke

THE VAN DYKE BOOK

SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF

HENRY VAN DYKE

BY

EDWIN MIMS, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN
TRINITY COLLEGE, DURHAM, N. C.

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY

BROOKE VAN DYKE

ILLUSTRATED

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THE FOOT-PATH TO PEACE

To be glad of life, because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars; to be contented with your possessions, but not satisfied with yourself until you have made the best of them; to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgusts; to covet nothing that is your neighbor's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and every day of Christ; and to spend as much time as you can, with body and with spirit, in God's out-of-doors—these are little guide-posts on the foot-path to peace.

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INTRODUCTION

To the already large number of mature and cultivated readers who have found in Dr. Henry van Dyke a friend and helper, it is hoped that many children may now be added. From his writings such essays, poems, and stories have been selected as may lead younger people into a genuine appreciation of nature and of human life as it is lived out-of-doors. From the reading of such selections must inevitably come a wholesome and manly view of life.

In Miss van Dyke's interesting sketch at the end of this volume she says that she and her brothers, in their younger days, often wished that their father might write a book for children. She has made clear, what a careful reader had felt before, that many of the stories, incidents, and poems here given have grown out of his relations to children. The memories of their early companionship, so tenderly portrayed by the daughter, are no less sacred to the father. To the Eden of his own childhood he has often turned in his imagination and been welcomed by the stranger-child—"the little child he used to be." These memories have been quickened by association with his children, who have been partners with him in much of his work.

A child should therefore find in these writings a

manifestation of the childlike mind, thoroughly at home in the woods and by the little rivers. It should be an inspiration, too, to realize that these selections are written by a man in the very prime of life—one of the best beloved and most useful of contemporary writers. The facts of his life may be obtained in the sketch already referred to. But there should come to even the younger readers of these selections a sense of the personality of the author. His personality may be felt in everything he has written—like Charles Lamb and Robert Louis Stevenson, he has written without reserve, and yet without egotism, of himself, his family, his friends, his likes and dislikes. When he does not write of himself, there is a light touch in his work that is the most personal element in style.

Even in a book of selections like this something of the range of the writer's work may be seen. It is rare that a man does such uniformly good work in fiction, poetry, and essay writing. There are contemporaries who have surpassed him in one or the other of these lines, but none who has shown the same versatility or worked with greater attention to the ideals of his art. His versatility as a man of letters is, however, but one feature of his many-sided life. He is widely known as a fisherman, easily holding among his contemporaries the place of Izaak Walton. He has his place in the college and university world—as a teacher of literature at Princeton and as a preacher at most, if not all, the leading colleges in America. He is a preacher of

decided power, and as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church at a critical time in its history did much to promote the cause of unity in all branches of the church, as well as to bring about a more reasonable statement of creed. Personally he is a man of attractive manners and of brilliant conversational powers. His various accomplishments and achievements in diverse fields were finely portrayed in a recent sonnet by Edmund Clarence Stedman at a dinner given to Dr. van Dyke by the Lotus Club of New York City:

> Health to the poet, scholar, wit, divine,
> In whom sweet Nature would all gifts combine
> To make us hang upon his lips and say—
> The Admirable Crichton of our day,
> Whose quill and lute and voice are weapons shear
> That quite outvie that gallant's swift rapier—
> Whose dulcet English, from its fount that wells
> This night, the Scotsman's dozen tongues excels!
> Long may he live, to wear the cloistral gown,
> Or from his Little Rivers bring to town—
> From every haunt where purling waters flow—
> The mystic flower that only votaries know!
> Wouldst view what Nature's portraiture is like?
> The Dame herself hath sat to this van Dyke.

His success in so many fields may be explained in part by his ability to "toil terribly" and his power of insight that enables him to go straight to the mark, whether he is preaching a sermon or writing a poem or story. But the full explanation may be seen in his richly developed personality. As his friend, Mr.

Hamilton W. Mabie, says, he lives in all his faculties. He loves nature, but is no solitary, for he is at his best with men and women; few men have finer appreciation of literature, but he knows that it is but secondary to life; he has a certain delicate humor, but it is mingled with an equally delicate pathos; he is thoroughly at home in the world of music and art, and all that belongs to a refined civilization, but there is "a wilding flavor in his blood" which all the civilization of the world will not eradicate. Crowning all his qualities is a vital faith in the Christian religion, which gives unity to his character and his work. And there is, notwithstanding the variety of his work, an essential unity underlying it. When a pastor he often substituted a story for a sermon, as "The Toiling of Felix" or the story of "The Other Wise Man." As a story-writer he combines with local color an inner light—a desire to get at the mysterious element of the human soul—"the very pulse of the machine." The stories in his latest volume have as a motive the inward search for happiness symbolized by the Blue Flower—the token of the infinite in man. As a teacher and critic of literature he has emphasized the spiritual quality thereof more than any technical points involved. In all his poetry, as James Whitcomb Riley suggests in a recent sonnet, there may be heard the anthem of a devout soul.

What, it may be asked, is the attitude of such a man to the age in which he lives? He has in a way appropriated the full spirit of his age, or at

least he has not railed against it. And yet he has been strong in his insistence upon certain dangers inherent in the American life of the present time. In a time of hurry and confusion he has set forth the ideal of the gentle life. In an age of industrialism he has been a sentinel of the spirit. The tendency of literature in his time has been toward a certain realism; he has kept alive the spirit of a healthy idealism. Living in an academic community during recent years, and all his life interested in colleges and universities, he has pointed out the danger of extreme specialization, finding that for himself and for others there is a necessity for the abundant life, rather than one confined within narrow limits. At a time when, as Mr. Bliss Perry has recently pointed out, there is a danger of indifferentism among men of culture and wealth, he has written with enthusiasm of nature, literature, and life. To men resting in "the crude unregenerate strength of intellect" he has told the need of the simple human heart. To the church, insisting overmuch on dogma, he has uttered a protest in behalf of a spiritual life that transcends dogma, while to men of doubt he has preached the gospel of a divine personality.

The full significance of the preceding paragraph cannot be felt by children, but even without this realization of what Dr. van Dyke has meant to the age in which he has lived, they should be able to absorb much of his spirit. After all, a better introduction cannot be given to this book than his own

words at the end of his first chapter in "Little Rivers":

"You shall not be deceived in this book. It is nothing but a handful of rustic variations on the old tune of 'Rest and be thankful,' a record of unconventional travel, a pilgrim's scrip with a few bits of blue-sky philosophy in it. There is, so far as I know, very little useful information and absolutely no criticism of the universe to be found in this volume. So if you are what Izaak Walton calls 'a severe, sour-complexioned man,' you would better carry it back to the bookseller, and get your money again, if he will give it to you, and go your way rejoicing after your own melancholy fashion.

"But if you care for plain pleasures, and informal company, and friendly observations on men and things (and a few true fish-stories), then perhaps you may find something here not unworthy your perusal. And so I wish that your winter fire may burn clear and bright while you read these pages; and that the summer days may be fair, and the fish may rise merrily to your fly, whenever you follow one of these little rivers."

EDWIN MIMS.

PART I

MEMORIES AND PICTURES

A BOY AND A ROD

I

STRANGELY enough, you cannot recall the boy himself at all distinctly. There is only the faintest image of him on the endless roll of films that has been wound through your mental camera; and in the very spots where his small figure should appear, it seems as if the pictures were always light-struck. Just a blur, and the dim outline of a new cap, or a well-beloved jacket with extra pockets, or a much-hated pair of copper-toed shoes—that is all you can see.

But the people that the boy saw, the companions who helped or hindered him in his adventures, the sublime and marvellous scenes among the Catskills and the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains, in the midst of which he lived and moved and had his summer holidays—all these stand out sharp and clear, as the "Bab Ballads" say,

> "Photographically lined
> On the tablets of your mind."

And most vivid do these scenes and people become when the vague and irrecoverable boy who walks among them carries a rod over his shoulder, and

you detect the soft bulginess of wet fish about his clothing, and perhaps the tail of a big one emerging from his pocket. Then it seems almost as if these were things that had really happened, and of which you yourself were a great part.

Now this was the way in which the boy came into possession of his rod. He was by nature and heredity one of those predestined anglers whom Izaak Walton tersely describes as "born so." His earliest passion was fishing. His favorite passage in Holy Writ was that place where Simon Peter throws a line into the sea and pulls out a great fish at the first cast.

But hitherto his passion had been indulged under difficulties—with improvised apparatus of cut poles, and flabby pieces of string, and bent pins, which always failed to hold the biggest fish; or perhaps with borrowed tackle, dangling a fat worm in vain before the noses of the staring, supercilious sunfish that poised themselves in the clear water around the Lake House dock at Lake George; or, at best, on picnic parties across the lake, marred by the humiliating presence of nurses, and disturbed by the obstinate refusal of old Horace, the boatman, to believe that the boy could bait his own hook, but sometimes crowned with the delight of bringing home a whole basketful of yellow perch and goggle-eyes. Of nobler sport with game fish, like the vaulting salmon and the merry, pugnacious trout, as yet the boy had only dreamed. But he had heard that there were such fish in the streams that flowed down from

the mountains around Lake George, and he was at the happy age when he could believe anything—if it was sufficiently interesting.

There was one little river, and only one, within his knowledge and the reach of his short legs. It was a tiny, lively rivulet that came out of the woods about half a mile away from the hotel, and ran down cater-cornered through a sloping meadow, crossing the road under a flat bridge of boards, just beyond the root-beer shop at the lower end of the village. It seemed large enough to the boy, and he had long had his eye upon it as a fitting theatre for the beginning of a real angler's life. Those rapids, those falls, those deep, whirling pools with beautiful foam on them like soft, white custard, were they not such places as the trout loved to hide in?

You can see the long hotel piazza, with the gossipy groups of wooden chairs standing vacant in the early afternoon; for the grown-up people are dallying with the ultimate nuts and raisins of their mid-day dinner. A villainous clatter of innumerable little vegetable-dishes comes from the open windows of the pantry as the boy steals past the kitchen end of the house, with Horace's lightest bamboo pole over his shoulder, and a little brother in skirts and short white stockings tagging along behind him.

When they come to the five-rail fence where the brook runs out of the field, the question is, Over or under? The lowlier method seems safer for the little brother, as well as less conspicuous for per-

sons who desire to avoid publicity until their enterprise has achieved success. So they crawl beneath a bend in the lowest rail—only tearing one tiny three-cornered hole in a jacket, and making some juicy green stains on the white stockings—and emerge with suppressed excitement in the field of the cloth of buttercups and daisies.

What an afternoon—how endless and yet how swift! What perilous efforts to leap across the foaming stream at its narrowest points; what escapes from quagmires and possible quicksands; what stealthy creeping through the grass to the edge of a likely pool, and cautious dropping of the line into an unseen depth, and patient waiting for a bite, until the restless little brother, prowling about below, discovers that the hook is not in the water at all, but lying on top of a dry stone; thereby proving that patience is not the only virtue, or, at least, that it does a better business when it has a small vice of impatience in partnership with it!

How tired the adventurers grow as the day wears away; and as yet they have taken nothing! But their strength and courage return as if by magic when there comes a surprising twitch at the line in a shallow, unpromising rapid, and with a jerk of the pole a small, wiggling fish is whirled through the air and landed thirty feet back in the meadow.

"For pity's sake, don't lose him! There he is among the roots of the blue flag."

"I've got him! How cold he is—how slippery—how pretty! Just like a piece of rainbow!"

"Do you see the red spots? Did you notice how gamy he was, little brother; how he played? It is a trout, for sure; a real trout, almost as long as your hand."

So the two lads tramp along up the stream, chattering as if there were no rubric of silence in the angler's code. Presently another simple-minded troutling falls a victim to their unpremeditated art; and they begin already, being human, to wish for something larger. In the very last pool that they dare attempt—a dark hole under a steep bank, where the brook issues from the woods—the boy drags out the hoped-for prize, a splendid trout, longer than a new lead-pencil. But he feels sure that there must be another, even larger, in the same place. He swings his line out carefully over the water, and just as he is about to drop it in, the little brother, perched on the sloping brink, slips on the smooth pine-needles, and goes sliddering down into the pool up to his waist. How he weeps with dismay, and how funnily his dress sticks to him as he crawls out! But his grief is soon assuaged by the privilege of carrying the trout strung on an alder twig; and it is a happy, muddy, proud pair of urchins that climb over the fence out of the field of triumph at the close of the day.

What does the father say, as he meets them in the road? Is he frowning or smiling under that big brown beard? You cannot be quite sure. But one thing is clear: he is as much elated over the capture of the real trout as anyone. He is ready

to deal mildly with a little irregularity for the sake of encouraging pluck and perseverance. He makes the boy feel that running away with his little brother to go fishing is an offence which must never be repeated, and then promises him a new fishing-rod, all his own, if he will always ask leave before he goes out to use it.

The arrival of the rod, in four joints, with an extra tip, a brass reel, and the other luxuries for which a true angler would willingly exchange the necessaries of life, marked a new epoch in the boy's career. One of the first events that followed was the purchase of a pair of high rubber boots. Inserted in this armor of modern infantry, and transfigured with delight, the boy clumped through all the little rivers within a circuit of ten miles from Caldwell, and began to learn by parental example the yet unmastered art of complete angling.

But because some of the streams were deep and strong, and his legs were short and slender, and his ambition was even taller than his boots, the father would sometimes take him up pickaback, and wade along carefully through the perilous places —which are often, in this world, the very places one longs to fish in. So, in your remembrance, you can see the little rubber boots sticking out under the father's arms, and the rod projecting over his head, and the bait dangling down unsteadily into the deep holes, and the delighted boy hooking and playing and basketing his trout high in the air.

. . . . . .

II

The promotion from all-day picnics to a two weeks' camping-trip is like going from school to college. By this time a natural process of evolution has raised the first rod to something lighter and more flexible—a fly-rod, so to speak, but not a bigoted one—just a serviceable, unprejudiced article, not above using any kind of bait that may be necessary to catch the fish. The father has received the new title of "governor," indicating not less, but more authority, and has called in new instructors to carry on the boy's education: real Adirondack guides—old Sam Dunning and one-eyed Enos, the last and laziest of the Saranac Indians. Better men will be discovered for later trips, but none more amusing, and none whose wood-craft seems more wonderful than that of this queerly matched team, as they make the first camp in a pelting rain-storm on the shore of Big Clear Pond. The pitching of the tents is a lesson in architecture, the building of the camp-fire a victory over damp nature, and the supper of potatoes and bacon and fried trout a veritable triumph of culinary art.

At midnight the rain is pattering persistently on the canvas; the front flaps are closed and tied together; the lingering fire shines through them and sends vague shadows wavering up and down; the governor is rolled up in his blankets, sound asleep. It is a very long night for the boy.

What is that rustling noise outside the tent?

Probably some small creature, a squirrel or a rabbit. Rabbit stew would be good for breakfast. But it sounds louder now, almost loud enough to be a fox; there are no wolves left in the Adirondacks, or at least only a very few. That is certainly quite a heavy footstep prowling around the provision-box. Could it be a panther—they step very softly for their size—or a bear, perhaps? Sam Dunning told about catching one in a trap just below here. (Ah, my boy, you will soon learn that there is no spot in all the forests created by a bountiful Providence so poor as to be without its bear story.) Where was the rifle put? There it is, at the foot of the tent-pole. Wonder if it is loaded?

"Waugh-ho! Waugh-ho-o-o-o!"

The boy springs from his blankets like a cat, and peeps out between the tent-flaps. There sits Enos, in the shelter of a leaning tree by the fire, with his head thrown back and a bottle poised at his mouth. His lonely eye is cocked up at a great horned owl on the branch above him. Again the sudden voice breaks out:

"Whoo! whoo! whoo cooks for you all?"

Enos puts the bottle down, with a grunt, and creeps off to his tent.

"De debbil in dat owl," he mutters. "How he know I cook for dis camp? How he know 'bout dat bottle? Ugh!"

There are hundreds of pictures that flash into light as the boy goes on his course, year after year, through the woods. There is the luxurious camp

on Tupper's Lake, with its log cabins in the spruce-grove, and its regiment of hungry men who ate almost a deer a day; and there is the little bark shelter on the side of Mount Marcy, where the governor and the boy, with baskets full of trout from the Opalescent River, are spending the night, with nothing but a fire to keep them warm. There is the North Bay at Moosehead, with Joe La Croix (one more Frenchman who thinks he looks like Napoleon) posing on the rocks beside his canoe, and only reconciled by his vanity to the wasteful pastime of taking photographs while the big fish are rising gloriously out at the end of the point. There is the small spring-hole beside the Saranac River, where Pliny Robbins and the boy caught twenty-three noble trout, weighing from one to three pounds apiece, in the middle of a hot August afternoon, and hid themselves in the bushes whenever they heard a party coming down the river, because they did not care to attract company; and there are the Middle Falls, where the governor stood on a long spruce log, taking two-pound fish with the fly, and stepping out at every cast a little nearer to the end of the log, until it slowly tipped with him, and he settled down into the river.

Among such scenes as these the boy pursued his education, learning many things that are not taught in colleges; learning to take the weather as it comes, wet or dry, and fortune as it falls, good or bad; learning that a meal which is scanty fare for one becomes a banquet for two—provided the other is

the right person; learning that there is some skill in everything, even in digging bait, and that what is called luck consists chiefly in having your tackle in good order; learning that a man can be just as happy in a log shanty as in a brownstone mansion, and that the very best pleasures are those that do not leave a bad taste in the mouth. And in all this the governor was his best teacher and his closest comrade.

LITTLE RIVERS

A RIVER is the most human and companionable of all inanimate things. It has a life, a character, a voice of its own, and is as full of good fellowship as a sugar-maple is of sap. It can talk in various tones, loud or low, and of many subjects, grave and gay. Under favorable circumstances it will even make a shift to sing, not in a fashion that can be reduced to notes and set down in black and white on a sheet of paper, but in a vague, refreshing manner, and to a wandering air that goes

"Over the hills and far away."

For real company and friendship, there is nothing outside of the animal kingdom that is comparable to a river.

I will admit that a very good case can be made out in favor of some other objects of natural affection. Trees seem to come very close to our life. They are often rooted in our richest feelings, and our sweetest memories, like birds, build nests in their branches. I remember, the last time that I saw James Russell Lowell (only a few weeks before his musical voice was hushed), he walked out with me into the quiet garden at Elmwood to say good-

by. There was a great horse-chestnut tree beside the house, towering above the gable, and covered with blossoms from base to summit—a pyramid of green supporting a thousand smaller pyramids of white. The poet looked up at it with his gray, pain-furrowed face, and laid his trembling hand upon the trunk. "I planted the nut," said he, "from which this tree grew; and my father was with me and showed me how to plant it."

Yes, there is a good deal to be said in behalf of tree-worship. But when I can go where I please and do what I like best, my feet turn not to a tree, but to the bank of a river, for there the musings of solitude find a friendly accompaniment, and human intercourse is purified and sweetened by the flowing, murmuring water. It is by a river that I would choose to make love, and to revive old friendships, and to play with the children, and to confess my faults, and to escape from vain, selfish desires, and to cleanse my mind from all the false and foolish things that mar the joy and peace of living. Like David's hart, I pant for the water-brooks. There is wisdom in the advice of Seneca, who says, "Where a spring rises, or a river flows, there should we build altars and offer sacrifices."

Every river that flows is good, and has something worthy to be loved. But those that we love most are always the ones that we have known best —the stream that ran before our father's door, the current on which we ventured our first boat or cast our first fly, the brook on whose banks we first

picked the twin-flower of young love. I am all for the little rivers. Let those who will, chant in heroic verse the renown of Amazon and Mississippi and Niagara, but my prose shall flow—or straggle along at such a pace as the prosaic muse may grant me to attain—in praise of Beaverkill and Neversink and Swiftwater, of Saranac and Raquette and Ausable, of Allegash and Aroostook and Moose River.

I will set my affections upon rivers that are not too great for intimacy. And if by chance any of these little ones have also become famous, like the Tweed and the Thames and the Arno, I at least will praise them, because they are still at heart little rivers.

The real way to know a little river is not to glance at it here or there in the course of a hasty journey, nor to become acquainted with it after it has been partly civilized and spoiled by too close contact with the works of man. You must go to its native haunts; you must see it in youth and freedom; you must accommodate yourself to its pace, and give yourself to its influence, and follow its meanderings whithersoever they may lead you.

Now, of this pleasant pastime there are three principal forms. You may go as a walker, taking the riverside path, or making a way for yourself through the tangled thickets or across the open meadows. You may go as a sailer, launching your light canoe on the swift current and committing yourself for a day, or a week, or a month, to the delightful uncertainties of a voyage through the

forest. You may go as a wader, stepping into the stream and going down with it, through rapids and shallows and deeper pools, until you come to the end of your courage and the daylight. Of these three ways I know not which is best. But in all of them the essential thing is that you must be willing and glad to be led; you must take the little river for your guide, philosopher, and friend.

And what a good guidance it gives you. How cheerfully it lures you on into the secrets of field and wood, and brings you acquainted with the birds and the flowers. The stream can show you, better than any other teacher, how nature works her enchantments with color and music.

Go out to the Beaverkill

"In the tassel-time of spring,"

and follow its brimming waters through the budding forests, to that corner which we call the Painter's Camp. See how the banks are all enamelled with the pale hepatica, the painted trillium, and the delicate pink-veined spring beauty. A little later in the year, when the ferns are uncurling their long fronds, the troops of blue and white violets will come dancing down to the edge of the stream, and creep venturously out to the very end of that long, moss-covered log in the water. Before these have vanished, the yellow crow-foot and the cinquefoil will appear, followed by the star-grass and the loosestrife and the golden St. John's-wort. Then the unseen painter begins to mix the royal color on his

palette, and the red of the bee-balm catches your eye. If you are lucky, you may find, in midsummer, a slender fragrant spike of the purple-fringed orchis, and you cannot help finding the universal self-heal. Yellow returns in the drooping flowers of the jewel-weed, and blue repeats itself in the trembling hare-bells, and scarlet is glorified in the flaming robe of the cardinal-flower. Later still, the summer closes in a splendor of bloom, with gentians and asters and golden-rod.

You never get so close to the birds as when you are wading quietly down a little river, casting your fly deftly under the branches for the wary trout, but ever on the lookout for all the various pleasant things that nature has to bestow upon you. Here you shall come upon the cat-bird at her morning bath, and hear her sing, in a clump of pussy-willows, that low, tender, confidential song which she keeps for the hours of domestic intimacy. The spotted sandpiper will run along the stones before you, crying, *"Wet-feet, wet-feet!"* and bowing and teetering in the friendliest manner, as if to show you the way to the best pools. In the thick branches of the hemlocks that stretch across the stream, the tiny warblers, dressed in a hundred colors, chirp and twitter confidingly above your head; and the Maryland yellow-throat, flitting through the bushes like a little gleam of sunlight, calls *"Witchery, witchery, witchery!"* That plaintive, forsaken, persistent note, never ceasing, even in the noonday silence, comes from the wood-pewee, drooping upon

the bough of some high tree, and complaining, like Mariana in the moated grange, *"Weary, weary, wéary!"*

When the stream runs out into the old clearing, or down through the pasture, you find other and livelier birds—the robin, with his sharp, saucy call and breathless, merry warble; the bluebird, with his notes of pure gladness, and the oriole, with his wild, flexible whistle; the chewink, bustling about in the thicket, talking to his sweetheart in French, *"Chérie, chérie!"* and the song-sparrow, perched on his favorite limb of a young maple, close beside the water, and singing happily, through sunshine and through rain. This is the true bird of the brook, after all: the winged spirit of cheerfulness and contentment, the patron saint of little rivers, the fisherman's friend. He seems to enter into your sport with his good wishes, and for an hour at a time, while you are trying every fly in your book, from a black gnat to a white miller, to entice the crafty old trout at the foot of the meadow-pool, the song-sparrow, close above you, will be chanting patience and encouragement. And when at last success crowns your endeavor, and the party-colored prize is glittering in your net, the bird on the bough breaks out in an ecstasy of congratulation: *"Catch 'im, catch 'im, catch 'im; oh, what a pretty fellow! sweet!"*

There are other birds that seem to have a very different temper. The blue-jay sits high up in the withered pine-tree, bobbing up and down, and call-

ing to his mate in a tone of affected sweetness, *"Salúte-her, salúte-her,"* but when you come in sight he flies away with a harsh cry of *"Thief, thief, thief!"* The kingfisher, ruffling his crest in solitary pride on the end of a dead branch, darts down the stream at your approach, winding up his reel angrily as if he despised you for interrupting his fishing. And the cat-bird, that sang so charmingly while she thought herself unobserved, now tries to scare you away by screaming *"Snake, snake!"*

As evening draws near, and the light beneath the trees grows yellower, and the air is full of filmy insects out for their last dance, the voice of the little river becomes louder and more distinct. The true poets have often noticed this apparent increase in the sound of flowing waters at nightfall. Gray, in one of his letters, speaks of "hearing the murmur of many waters not audible in the daytime." Wordsworth repeats the same thought almost in the same words:

> "A soft and lulling sound is heard
> Of streams inaudible by day."

And Tennyson, in the valley of Cauteretz, tells of the river

> "Deepening his voice with deepening of the night."

It is in this mystical hour that you will hear the most celestial and entrancing of all bird-notes, the songs of the thrushes—the hermit, and the wood-thrush, and the veery. Sometimes, but not often,

you will see the singers. I remember once, at the close of a beautiful day's fishing on the Swiftwater, I came out, just after sunset, into a little open space in an elbow of the stream. It was still early spring, and the leaves were tiny. On the top of a small sumac, not thirty feet away from me, sat a veery. I could see the pointed spots upon his breast, the swelling of his white throat, and the sparkle of his eyes, as he poured his whole heart into a long liquid chant, the clear notes rising and falling, echoing and interlacing in endless curves of sound. Other bird-songs can be translated into words, but not this. There is no interpretation. It is music—as Sidney Lanier defines it,

"Love in search of a word."

. . . . . .

Little rivers have small responsibilities. They are not expected to bear huge navies on their breast or supply a hundred thousand horse-power to the factories of a monstrous town. Neither do you come to them hoping to draw out Leviathan with a hook. It is enough if they run a harmless, amiable course, and keep the groves and fields green and fresh along their banks, and offer a happy alternation of nimble rapids and quiet pools,

"With here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling."

When you set out to explore one of these minor streams in your canoe, you have no intention of

epoch-making discoveries or thrilling and world-famous adventures. You float placidly down the long still waters, and make your way patiently through the tangle of fallen trees that block the stream, and run the smaller falls, and carry your boat around the larger ones, with no loftier ambition than to reach a good camp-ground before dark and to pass the intervening hours pleasantly, "without offence to God or man." It is an agreeable frame of mind for one who has done his fair share of work in the world, and is not inclined to grumble at his wages. And I suspect there are many tempers and attitudes, often called virtuous, in which the human spirit appears to less advantage in the sight of Heaven.

WOOD-MAGIC

THERE are three vines that belong to the ancient forest. Elsewhere they will not grow, though the soil prepared for them be never so rich, the shade of the arbor built for them never so closely and cunningly woven. Their delicate, thread-like roots take no hold upon the earth tilled and troubled by the fingers of man. The fine sap that steals through their long, slender limbs pauses and fails when they are watered by human hands. Silently the secret of their life retreats and shrinks away and hides itself.

But in the woods, where falling leaves and crumbling tree-trunks and wilting ferns have been moulded by Nature into a deep, brown humus, clean and fragrant—in the woods, where the sunlight filters green and golden through interlacing branches, and where pure moisture of distilling rains and melting snows is held in treasury by never-failing banks of moss—under the verdurous flood of the forest, like sea-weeds under the ocean waves, these three little creeping vines put forth their hands with joy, and spread over rock and hillock and twisted tree-root and mouldering log, in cloaks and scarves and wreaths of tiny evergreen, glossy leaves.

One of them is adorned with white pearls sprinkled lightly over its robe of green. This is Snowberry, and if you eat of it you will grow wise in the wisdom of flowers. You will know where to find the yellow violet, and the wake-robin, and the pink lady-slipper, and the scarlet sage, and the fringed gentian. You will understand how the buds trust themselves to the spring in their unfolding, and how the blossoms trust themselves to the winter in their withering, and how the busy hands of Nature are ever weaving the beautiful garment of life out of the strands of death, and nothing is lost that yields itself to her quiet handling.

Another of the vines of the forest is called Partridge-berry. Rubies are hidden among its foliage, and if you eat of this fruit you will grow wise in the wisdom of birds. You will know where the oven-bird secretes her nest, and where the woodcock dances in the air at night; the drumming-log of the ruffed grouse will be easy to find, and you will see the dark lodges of the evergreen thickets inhabited by hundreds of warblers. There will be no dead silence for you in the forest any longer, but you will hear sweet and delicate voices on every side, voices that you know and love; you will catch the key-note of the silver flute of the wood-thrush, and the silver harp of the veery, and the silver bells of the hermit; and something in your heart will answer to them all. In the frosty stillness of October nights you will see the airy tribes flitting across the moon, following the secret call that guides them

southward. In the calm brightness of winter sunshine, filling sheltered copses with warmth and cheer, you will watch the lingering bluebirds and robins and song-sparrows playing at summer, while the chickadees and the juncos and the cross-bills make merry in the wind-swept fields. In the lucent mornings of April you will hear your old friends coming home to you, Phœbe, and oriole, and yellow-throat, and red-wing, and tanager, and catbird. When they call to you and greet you, you will understand that Nature knows a secret for which man has never found a word—the secret that tells itself in song.

The third of the forest-vines is Wood-Magic. It bears neither flower nor fruit. Its leaves are hardly to be distinguished from the leaves of the other vines. Perhaps they are a little rounder than the Snowberry's, a little more pointed than the Partridge-berry's; sometimes you might mistake them for the one, sometimes for the other. No marks of warning have been written upon them. If you find them, it is your fortune; if you taste them, it is your fate.

For as you browse your way through the forest, nipping here and there a rosy leaf of young winter-green, a fragrant emerald tip of balsam-fir, a twig of spicy birch, if by chance you pluck the leaves of Wood-Magic and eat them, you will not know what you have done, but the enchantment of the tree-land will enter your heart and the charm of the wildwood will flow through your veins.

You will never get away from it. The sighing of the wind through the pine-trees and the laughter of the stream in its rapids will sound through all your dreams. On beds of silken softness you will long for the sleep-song of whispering leaves above your head and the smell of a couch of balsam-boughs. At tables spread with dainty fare you will be hungry for the joy of the hunt and for the angler's sylvan feast. In proud cities you will weary for the sight of a mountain trail; in great cathedrals you will think of the long, arching aisles of the woodland; and in the noisy solitude of crowded streets you will hone after the friendly forest.

This is what will happen to you if you eat the leaves of that little vine, Wood-Magic.

CAMPING OUT

I

THE GUIDES

THEY are all French Canadians of unmixed blood, descendants of the men who came to New France with Champlain, three centuries ago. Ferdinand Larouche, our head guide, is a stocky little fellow, a "sawed off" man, not more than five feet two inches tall, but every inch of him is pure vim. He can carry a big canoe or a hundredweight of camp stuff over a mile portage without stopping to take breath. He is a capital canoeman, with prudence enough to balance his courage, and a fair cook, with plenty of that quality which is wanting in the ordinary cook of commerce —good humor. Always joking, whistling, singing, he brings the atmosphere of a perpetual holiday along with him. His weather-worn coat covers a heart full of music. He has two talents which make him a marked man among his comrades: he plays the fiddle to the delight of all the balls and weddings through the country-side, and he speaks English to the admiration and envy of the other guides. But like all men of genius, he is modest about his accom-

plishments. "H'I not spik good h'English—h'only for camp—fishin', cookin', dhe voyage—h'all dhose t'ings." The aspirates puzzle him. He can get through a slash of fallen timber more easily than a sentence full of "this" and "that." Sometimes he expresses his meaning queerly. He was telling me once about his farm, "not far off here, in dhe *Rivière au Cochon,* river of dhe pig, you call 'im. H'I am a widow, got five sons, t'ree of dhem are girls." But he usually ends by falling back into French, which, he assures you, you speak to perfection, "much better than the Canadians; the French of Paris, in short—M'sieu' has been in Paris?" Such courtesy is born in the blood, and is irresistible. You cannot help returning the compliment and assuring him that his English is remarkable, good enough for all practical purposes, better than any of the other guides can speak. And so it is.

His brother François is a little taller, a little thinner, and considerably quieter than Ferdinand. He laughs loyally at his brother's jokes, and sings the response to his songs, and wields a good second paddle in the canoe.

Jean—commonly called Johnny—Morel is a tall, strong man of fifty, with a bushy red beard that would do credit to a pirate. But when you look at him more closely, you see that he has a clear, kind blue eye and a most honest, friendly face under his slouch hat. He has travelled these woods and waters for thirty years, so that he knows the way through them by a thousand familiar signs, as well

as you know the streets of the city. He is our path-finder.

The bow paddle in his canoe is held by his son Joseph, a lad not quite fifteen, but already as tall and almost as strong as a man. "He is yet of the youth," said Johnny, "and he knows not the affairs of the camp. This trip is for him the first—it is his school—but I hope he will content you. He is good, M'sieu', and of the strongest for his age. I have educated already two sons in the bow of my canoe. The oldest has gone to *Pennsylvanie;* he peels the bark there for the tanning of leather. The second had the misfortune of breaking his leg, so that he can no longer kneel to paddle. He has descended to the making of shoes. Joseph is my third pupil. And I have still a younger one at home waiting to come into my school."

A touch of family life like that is always refreshing, and doubly so in the wilderness. For what is fatherhood at its best, everywhere, but the training of good men to take the teacher's place when his work is done? Some day, when Johnny's rheumatism has made his joints a little stiffer and his eyes have lost something of their keenness, he will be wielding the second paddle in the boat, and going out only on the short and easy trips. It will be young Joseph that steers the canoe through the dangerous places, and carries the heaviest load over the portages, and leads the way on the long journeys.

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II

RUNNING THE RAPIDS

We embarked our tents and blankets, our pots and pans, and bags of flour and potatoes and bacon and other delicacies, our rods and guns, and last, but not least, our axes (without which man in the woods is a helpless creature), in two birch-bark canoes, and went flying down the Saguenay.

It is a wonderful place, this outlet of Lake St. John. All the floods of twenty rivers are gathered here, and break forth through a net of islands in a double stream. The southern outlet is small, and flows somewhat more quietly at first. But the northern outlet is a huge confluence and tumult of waters. You see the set of the tide far out in the lake, sliding, driving, crowding, hurrying in with smooth currents and swirling eddies toward the corner of escape. By the rocky cove where the Island House peers out through the fir-trees, the current already has a perceptible slope. It begins to boil over hidden stones in the middle, and gurgles at projecting points of rock. A mile farther down there is an islet where the stream quickens, chafes, and breaks into a rapid. Behind the islet it drops down in three or four foaming steps. On the outside it makes one long, straight rush into a line of white-crested standing waves.

As we approached, the steersman in the first canoe stood up to look over the course. The sea was high.

Was it too high? The canoes were heavily loaded. Could they leap the waves? There was a quick talk among the guides as we slipped along, undecided which way to turn. Then the question seemed to settle itself, as most of these woodland questions do, as if some silent force of Nature had the casting-vote. "Let's try it!" cried Ferdinand, "Come on!" In a moment we were sliding down the smooth back of the rapid, directly toward the first big wave. The rocky shore went by us like a dream; we could feel the motion of the earth whirling around with us. The crest of the billow in front curled above the bow of the canoe. "Stop! Stop! Slowly!" A swift stroke of the paddle checked the canoe, quivering and prancing like a horse suddenly reined in. The wave ahead, as if surprised, sank and flattened for a second. The canoe leaped through the edge of it, swerved to one side, and ran gayly down along the fringe of the line of billows, into quieter water.

Our guides began to shout, and joke each other, and praise their canoes.

"You grazed that villain rock at the corner," said Jean; "didn't you know where it was?"

"Yes, after I touched it," cried Ferdinand; "but you took in a bucket of water, and I suppose your *m'sieu'* is sitting on a piece of the river. Is it not?"

This seemed to us all a very merry jest. It is one of the charms of life in the woods that it brings back the high spirits of boyhood and renews the

DOWN THE PERIBONCA

youth of the world. Plain fun, like plain food, tastes good out-of-doors.

The first little rapid was only the beginning. Half a mile below we could see the river disappear between two points of rock. There was a roar of conflict, and a golden mist hanging in the air, like the smoke of battle. All along the place where the river sank from sight, dazzling heads of foam were flashing up and falling back, as if a horde of water-sprites were vainly trying to fight their way up to the lake. It was the top of a wild succession of falls and pools where no boat could live for a moment. We ran down toward it as far as the water served, and then turned off among the rocks on the left hand, to take the portage.

These portages are among the troublesome delights of a journey in the wilderness. To the guides they mean hard work, for everything, including the boats, must be carried on their backs. The march of the canoes on dry land is a curious sight. But the sportsman carries nothing, except, perhaps, his gun, or his rod, or his photographic camera; and so for him the portage is only a pleasant opportunity to stretch his legs, cramped by sitting in the canoe, and to renew his acquaintance with the pretty things that are in the woods.

We sauntered along the trail as if school were out and would never keep again. How fresh and tonic the forest seemed as we plunged into its bath of shade. There were our old friends the cedars, with their roots twisted across the path; and the

white birches, so trim in youth and so shaggy in age; and the sociable spruces and balsams, crowding close together, and interlacing their arms overhead. There were the little springs, trickling through the moss; and the slippery logs laid across the marshy places; and the fallen trees, cut in two and pushed aside—for this was a much-travelled portage.

Around the open spaces, the tall meadow-rue stood dressed in robes of fairy white and green. The blue banners of the *fleur-de-lis* were planted beside the springs. In shady corners, deeper in the wood, the fragrant pyrola lifted its scape of clustering bells, like a lily of the valley wandered to the forest. When we came to the end of the portage, among the loose grasses by the water-side we found the exquisite purple spikes of the lesser fringed orchis, loveliest and most ethereal of all the woodland flowers save one.

We launched our canoes again on the great pool at the foot of the first fall—a broad sweep of water a mile long and half a mile wide, full of eddies and strong currents, and covered with drifting foam. There was the old camp-ground on the point where I had tented so often. And there were the big fish, showing their back fins as they circled lazily around in the eddies, as if they were waiting to play with us. But the goal of our day's journey was miles away, and we swept along with the stream.

III

THE TENT

Men may say what they will in praise of their houses, but, for our part, we are agreed that there is nothing to be compared with a tent. It is the most venerable and aristocratic form of human habitation. Abraham and Sarah lived in it, and shared its hospitality with angels. It is exempt from the base tyranny of the plumber, the paper-hanger, and the gas-man. It is not immovably bound to one dull spot of earth by the chains of a cellar and a system of water-pipes. It has a noble freedom of locomotion. It follows the wishes of its inhabitants, and goes with them, a travelling home, as the spirit moves them to explore the wilderness. At their pleasure, new beds of wild flowers surround it, new plantations of trees over-shadow it, and new avenues of shining water lead to its ever-open door. What the tent lacks in luxury it makes up in liberty: or rather let us say that liberty itself is the greatest luxury.

Another thing is worth remembering—a family which lives in a tent never can have a skeleton in the closet.

But it must not be supposed that every spot in the woods is suitable for a camp, or that a good tenting-ground can be chosen without knowledge and forethought. One of the requisites, indeed, is to be found everywhere in the St. John region;

for all the lakes and rivers are full of clear, cool water, and the traveller does not need to search for a spring. But it is always necessary to look carefully for a bit of smooth ground on the shore, far enough above the water to be dry, and slightly sloping, so that the head of the bed may be higher than the foot. Above all, it must be free from big stones and serpentine roots of trees. A root that looks no bigger than an inch-worm in the daytime assumes the proportions of a boa-constrictor at midnight—when you find it under your hip-bone. There should also be plenty of evergreens near at hand for the beds. Spruce will answer at a pinch; it has an aromatic smell; but it is too stiff and humpy. Hemlock is smoother and more flexible; but the spring soon wears out of it. The balsam-fir, with its elastic branches and thick flat needles, is the best of all. A bed of these boughs a foot deep is softer than a mattress and as fragrant as a thousand Christmas-trees. Two things more are needed for the ideal camp-ground—an open situation, where the breeze will drive away the flies and mosquitoes, and an abundance of dry firewood within easy reach. Yes, and a third thing must not be forgotten, for, says my lady Greygown:

"I shouldn't feel at home in camp unless I could sit in the door of the tent and look out across flowing water."

All these conditions are met in our favorite camping place below the first fall in the Grande Décharge. A rocky point juts out into the river

and makes a fine landing for the canoes. There is a dismantled fishing-cabin a few rods back in the woods, from which we can borrow boards for a table and chairs. A group of cedars on the lower edge of the point opens just wide enough to receive and shelter our tent. At a good distance beyond ours, the guides' tent is pitched; and the big camp-fire burns between the two dwellings. A pair of white-birches lift their leafy crowns far above us, and after them we name the place.

What an admirable, lovable, and comfortable tree is the white-birch, the silver queen of the forest, beautiful to look upon and full of various uses. Its wood is strong to make paddles and axe handles, and glorious to burn, blazing up at first with a flashing flame, and then holding the fire in its glowing heart all through the night. Its bark is the most serviceable of all the products of the wilderness. In Russia, they say, it is used in tanning, and gives its subtle, sacerdotal fragrance to Russia leather. But here, in the woods, it serves more primitive ends. It can be peeled off in a huge roll from some giant tree and fashioned into a swift canoe to carry man over the waters. It can be cut into square sheets to roof his shanty in the forest. It is the paper on which he writes his woodland despatches, and the flexible material which he bends into drinking-cups of silver lined with gold. A thin strip of it wrapped around the end of a candle and fastened in a cleft stick makes a practicable chandelier. A basket for berries, a

horn to call the lovelorn moose through the autumnal woods, a canvas on which to draw the outline of great and memorable fish—all these and many other indispensable luxuries are stored up for the skilful woodsman in the birch bark.

Only do not rob or mar the tree unless you really need what it has to give you. Let it stand and grow in virgin majesty, ungirdled and unscarred, while the trunk becomes a firm pillar of the forest temple, and the branches spread abroad a refuge of bright green leaves for the birds of the air. Nature never made a more excellent piece of handiwork.

IV

A LITTLE FISHING

The chief occupation of our idle days was fishing. Above the camp spread a noble pool more than two miles in circumference, and diversified with smooth bays and whirling eddies, sand beaches and rocky islands. The river poured into it at the head, foaming and raging, and swept out of it just in front of our camp in a merry, musical rapid. It was full of fish of various kinds—long-nosed pickerel, wall-eyed pike, and stupid chub. But the prince of the pool was the fighting ouananiche,* the land-locked salmon of St. John.

*Pronounce "*wan-an'i-sh.*"

Every morning and evening, Greygown and I would go out for ouananiche, and sometimes we caught plenty and sometimes few, but we never came back without a good catch of happiness. There were certain places where the fish liked to stay. For example, we always looked for one at the lower corner of a big rock, very close to it, where he could poise himself easily on the edge of the strong downward stream. Another likely place was a straight run of water, swift, but not too swift, with a sunken stone in the middle. The ouananiche does not like crooked, twisting water. An even current is far more comfortable, for then he discovers just how much effort is needed to balance against it, and keeps up the movement mechanically, as if he were half asleep. But his favorite place is under one of the floating islands of thick foam that gather in the corners below the falls. The matted flakes give a grateful shelter from the sun, I fancy, and almost all game-fish love to lie in the shade; but the chief reason why the ouananiche haunt the drifting white mass is because it is full of flies and gnats, beaten down by the spray of the cataract, and sprinkled all through the foam like plums in a cake. To this natural confection the little salmon, lurking in his corner, plays the part of Jack Horner all day long, and never wearies.

"See that foam down below there!" said Ferdinand, as we scrambled over the huge rocks at the foot of the falls; "there ought to be salmon

there." Yes, there were the sharp noses picking out the unfortunate insects, and the broad tails waving lazily through the foam as the fish turned in the water. At this season of the year, when summer is nearly ended, and every ouananiche in the river has tasted feathers and seen a hook, it is useless to attempt to delude them with the large gaudy flies which the fishing-tackle-maker recommends. There are only two successful methods of angling now. The first of these I tried, and by casting delicately with a tiny brown trout-fly tied on a gossamer strand of gut, captured a pair of fish weighing about three pounds each. They fought against the spring of the four-ounce rod for nearly half an hour before Ferdinand could slip the net around them. But there was another and a broader tail still waving disdainfully on the outer edge of the foam. "And now," said the gallant Ferdinand, "the turn is to madame, that she should prove her fortune—attend but a moment, madame, while I seek the bait."

This was the second method: a grasshopper was attached to the hook, and casting the line well out across the pool, Ferdinand put the rod into Greygown's hands. She stood poised upon a pinnacle of rock, like patience on a monument, waiting for a bite. It came. There was a slow, gentle pull at the line, answered by a quick jerk of the rod, and a noble fish flashed into the air. Four pounds and a half at least! He leaped again and again, shaking the drops from his silvery sides. He

rushed up the rapids as if he had determined to return to the lake, and down again as if he had changed his plans and determined to go to the Saguenay. He sulked in the deep water and rubbed his nose against the rocks. He did his best to treat that treacherous grasshopper as the whale served Jonah. But Greygown, through all her little screams and shouts of excitement, was steady and sage. She never gave the fish an inch of slack line; and at last he lay glittering on the rocks, with the black St. Andrew's crosses clearly marked on his plump sides, and the iridescent spots gleaming on his small, shapely head. "A beauty!" cried Ferdinand, as he held up the fish in triumph, "and it is madame who has the good fortune. She understands well to take the large fish—is it not?" Greygown stepped demurely down from her pinnacle, and as we drifted down the pool in the canoe, under the mellow evening sky, her conversation betrayed not a trace of the pride that a victorious fisherman would have shown. On the contrary, she insisted that angling was an affair of chance—which was consoling, though I knew it was not altogether true—and that the smaller fish were just as pleasant to catch and better to eat, after all.

V

MORNING AND EVENING

Our tent is on the border of a coppice of young trees. It is pleasant to be awakened by a convocation of birds at sunrise, and to watch the shadows of the leaves dance out upon our translucent roof of canvas.

All the birds in the bush are early, but there are so many of them that it is difficult to believe that every one can be rewarded with a worm. Here in Canada those little people of the air who appear as transient guests of spring and autumn in the Middle States, are in their summer home and breeding-place. Warblers, named for the magnolia and the myrtle, chestnut-sided, bay-breasted, blue-backed, and black-throated, flutter and creep along the branches with simple lisping music. Kinglets, ruby-crowned and golden-crowned, tiny, brilliant sparks of life, twitter among the trees, breaking occasionally into clearer, sweeter songs. Companies of redpoles and cross-bills pass chirping through the thickets, busily seeking their food. The fearless, familiar chickadee repeats his name merrily, while he leads his family to explore every nook and cranny of the wood. Cedar wax-wings, sociable wanderers, arrive in numerous flocks. The Canadians call them *"récollets,"* because they wear a brown crest of the same color as the hoods of the monks who came with the first settlers to New

France. They are a songless tribe, although their quick, reiterated call as they take to flight has given them the name of chatterers. The beautiful tree-sparrows and the pine-siskins are more melodious, and the slate-colored juncos, flitting about the camp, are as garrulous as chippy-birds. All these varied notes come and go through the tangle of morning dreams. And now the noisy blue-jay is calling *"Thief—thief—thief!"* in the distance, and a pair of great pileated woodpeckers with crimson crests are laughing loudly in the swamp over some family joke. But listen! what is that harsh creaking note? It is the cry of the northern shrike, of whom tradition says that he catches little birds and impales them on sharp thorns. At the sound of his voice the concert closes suddenly and the singers vanish into thin air. The hour of music is over; the commonplace of day has begun. And there is my lady Greygown, already up and dressed, standing by the breakfast-table and laughing at my belated appearance.

When the long, happy day is over, just before sundown we go for a little walk along the portage and up the hill behind the camp. There are blueberries growing abundantly among the rocks—huge clusters of them, bloomy and luscious as the grapes of Eshcol. The blueberry is Nature's compensation for the ruin of forest fires. It grows best where the woods have been burned away and the soil is too poor to raise another crop of trees.

And here is a bed of moss beside a dashing rivulet, inviting us to rest and be thankful. Hark! There is a white-throated sparrow, on a little tree across the river, whistling his sunset song

"In linkèd sweetness long drawn out."

Down in Maine they call him the Peabody-bird, because his notes sound to them like *Old mān—Péabody, péabody, péabody.* In New Brunswick the Scotch settlers say that he sings *Lost—lost—Kénnedy, kénnedy, kénnedy.* But here in his northern home I think we can understand him better. He is singing again and again, with a cadence that never wearies, *"Sweet—sweet—Cánada, cánada, cánada!"* The Canadians, when they came across the sea, remembering the nightingale of southern France, baptized this little gray minstrel with his name, and the country ballads are full of his praise. Every land has its nightingale, if we only have the heart to hear him. How distinct his voice is—how personal, how confidential, as if he had a message for us!

There is a breath of fragrance on the cool shady air beside our little stream, that seems familiar. It is the first week of September. Can it be that the twin-flower of June is blooming again? Yes, here is the threadlike stem lifting its two frail pink bells above the bed of shining leaves. How dear an early flower seems when it comes back again and unfolds its beauty in a St. Martin's summer! How

delicate and suggestive is the faint, magical odor! It is like a renewal of the dreams of youth.

"And need we ever grow old?" asked my lady Greygown, as she sat that evening with the twinflower on her breast, watching the stars come out along the edge of the cliffs, and tremble on the hurrying tide of the river. "Must we grow old as well as gray? Is the time coming when all life will be commonplace and practical, and governed by a dull 'of course'? Shall we not always find adventures and romances, and a few blossoms returning, even when the season grows late?"

"At least," I answered, "let us believe in the possibility, for to doubt it is to destroy it. If we can only come back to nature together every year, and consider the flowers and the birds, we shall die young, even though we live long: we shall have a treasure of memories which will be like the twinflower, always a double blossom on a single stem, and carry with us into the unseen world something which will make it worth while to be immortal."

THE OPEN FIRE

I

LIGHTING UP

MAN is the animal that has made friends with the fire.

All the other creatures, in their natural state, are afraid of it. They look upon it with wonder and dismay. It fascinates them, sometimes, with its glittering eyes in the night. The squirrels and the hares come pattering softly toward it through the underbrush around the new camp. The deer stands staring into the blaze of the jack while the hunter's canoe creeps through the lily-pads. But the charm that masters them is one of dread, not of love. It is the witchcraft of the serpent's lambent look. When they know what it means, when the heat of the fire touches them, or even when its smell comes clearly to their most delicate sense, they recognize it as their enemy, the Wild Huntsman whose red hounds can follow, follow for days without wearying, growing stronger and more furious with every turn of the chase. Let but a trail of smoke drift down the wind across the forest, and all the game for miles and miles will catch the signal for fear and flight.

Many of the animals have learned how to make houses for themselves. The *cabane* of the beaver is a wonder of neatness and comfort, much preferable to the wigwam of his Indian hunter. The muskrat knows how thick and high to build the dome of his water-side cottage, in order to protect himself against the frost of the coming winter and the floods of the following spring. The woodchuck's house has two or three doors; and the squirrel's dwelling is provided with a good bed and a convenient storehouse for nuts and acorns. The sportive otters have a toboggan slide in front of their residence; and the moose in winter make a "yard," where they can take exercise comfortably and find shelter for sleep. But there is one thing lacking in all these various dwellings—a fireplace.

Man is the only creature that dares to light a fire and to live with it. The reason? Because he alone has learned how to put it out.

It is true that two of his humbler friends have been converted to fire-worship. The dog and the cat, being half-humanized, have begun to love the fire. I suppose that a cat seldom comes so near to feeling a true sense of affection as when she has finished her saucer of bread and milk, and stretched herself luxuriously underneath the kitchen stove, while her faithful mistress washes up the dishes. As for a dog, I am sure that his admiring love for his master is never greater than when they come in together from the hunt, wet and tired, and the man gathers a pile of wood in front of the tent,

touches it with a tiny magic wand, and suddenly the clear, consoling flame springs up, saying cheerfully, "Here we are, at home in the forest; come into the warmth; rest, and eat, and sleep." When the weary, shivering dog sees this miracle, he knows that his master is a great man and a lord of things.

After all, that is the only real open fire. Wood is the fuel for it. Out-of-doors is the place for it. A furnace is an underground prison for a toiling slave. A stove is a cage for a tame bird. Even a broad hearthstone and a pair of glittering andirons —the best ornament of a room—must be accepted as an imitation of the real thing. The veritable open fire is built in the open, with the whole earth for a fireplace and the sky for a chimney.

To start a fire in the open is by no means as easy as it looks. It is one of those simple tricks that everyone thinks he can perform until he tries it. If, perhaps, you have to do it in the rain, with a single match, it requires no little art and skill.

There is plenty of wood everywhere, but not a bit to burn. The fallen trees are water-logged. The dead leaves are as damp as grief. The charred sticks that you find in an old fireplace are absolutely incombustible. Do not trust the handful of withered twigs and branches that you gather from the spruce-trees. They seem dry, but they are little better for your purpose than so much asbestos. You make a pile of them in some apparently suitable hollow, and lay a few larger sticks on top.

"The little friendship fire."

Then you hastily scratch your solitary match on the seat of your trousers and thrust it into the pile of twigs. What happens? The wind whirls around in your stupid little hollow, and the blue flame of the sulphur spurts and sputters for an instant, and then goes out. Or perhaps there is a moment of stillness; the match flares up bravely; the nearest twigs catch fire, crackling and sparkling; you hurriedly lay on more sticks; but the fire deliberately dodges them, creeps to the corner of the pile where the twigs are fewest and dampest, snaps feebly a few times, and expires in smoke. Now where are you? How far is it to the nearest match?

If you are wise, you will always make your fire before you light it. Time is never saved by doing a thing badly.

II

THE CAMP-FIRE

In the making of fires there is as much difference as in the building of houses. Everything depends upon the purpose that you have in view. There is the camp-fire, and the cooking-fire, and the smudge-fire, and the little friendship-fire—not to speak of other minor varieties. Each of these has its own proper style of architecture, and to mix them is false art and poor economy.

The object of the camp-fire is to give heat, and

incidentally light, to your tent or shanty. You can hardly build this kind of a fire unless you have a good axe and know how to chop. For the first thing that you need is a solid back-log, the thicker the better, to hold the heat and reflect it into the tent. This log must not be too dry, or it will burn out quickly. Neither must it be too damp, else it will smoulder and discourage the fire. The best wood for it is the body of a yellow birch, and, next to that, a green balsam. It should be five or six feet long, and at least two and a half feet in diameter. If you cannot find a tree thick enough, cut two or three lengths of a smaller one; lay the thickest log on the ground first, about ten or twelve feet in front of the tent; drive two strong stakes behind it, slanting a little backward; and lay the other logs on top of the first, resting against the stakes.

Now you are ready for the hand-chunks, or andirons. These are shorter sticks of wood, eight or ten inches thick, laid at right angles to the back-log, four or five feet apart. Across these you are to build up the firewood proper.

Use a dry spruce-tree, not one that has fallen, but one that is dead and still standing, if you want a lively, snapping fire. Use a hard maple or a hickory if you want a fire that will burn steadily and make few sparks. But if you like a fire to blaze up at first with a splendid flame, and then burn on with an enduring heat far into the night, a young white birch with the bark on is the tree to choose. Six or eight round sticks of this laid

across the hand-chunks, with perhaps a few quarterings of a larger tree, will make a glorious fire.

But before you put these on, you must be ready to light up. A few splinters of dry spruce or pine or balsam, stood endwise against the back-log, or, better still, piled up in a pyramid between the hand-chunks; a few strips of birch bark, and one good match—these are all that you want. But be sure that your match is a good one. You would better see to this before you go into the brush. Your comfort, even your life, may depend on it.

In the woods, the old-fashioned brimstone match of our grandfathers—the match with a brown head and a stout stick and a dreadful smell—is the best. But if you have only one, you would better not trust even that to light your fire directly. Use it first to touch off a roll of birch bark which you hold in your hand. Then, when the bark is well alight, crinkling and curling, push it under the heap of kindlings, give the flame time to take a good hold, and lay your wood over it, a stick at a time, until the whole pile is blazing. Now your fire is started. Your friendly little gnome with the red hair is ready to serve you through the night.

He will dry your clothes if you are wet. He will cheer you up if you are despondent. He will diffuse an air of sociability through the camp, and draw the men together in a half circle for story-telling and jokes and singing. He will hold a flambeau for you while you spread your blankets on the boughs and dress for bed. He will keep you warm

while you sleep—at least till about three o'clock in the morning, when you dream that you are out sleighing in your pajamas, and wake up with a shiver.

III

THE LITTLE FRIENDSHIP-FIRE

There are times and seasons when the angler has no need of the camp-fire, or the smudge-fire, or the cooking-fire. He sleeps in a house. His breakfast and dinner are cooked for him in a kitchen. He is in no great danger from black-flies or mosquitoes. All he needs now, as he sets out to spend a day on the Neversink, or the Willowemoc, or the Shepaug, or the Swiftwater, is a good lunch in his pocket, and a little friendship-fire to burn pleasantly beside him while he eats his frugal fare and prolongs his noonday rest.

This form of fire does less work than any other in the world. Yet it is far from being useless; and I, for one, should be sorry to live without it. Its only use is to make a visible centre of interest where there are two or three anglers eating their lunch together, or to supply a kind of companionship to a lone fisherman. It is kindled and burns for no other purpose than to give you the sense of being at home and at ease. Why the fire should do this, I cannot tell, but it does.

You may build your friendship-fire in almost

any way that pleases you; but this is the way in which you shall build it best. You have no axe, of course, so you must look about for the driest sticks that you can find. Do not seek them close beside the stream, for there they are likely to be water-soaked; but go back into the woods a bit and gather a good armful of fuel. Then break it, if you can, into lengths of about two feet, and construct your fire in the following fashion.

Lay two sticks parallel, and put between them a pile of dried grass, dead leaves, small twigs, and the paper in which your lunch was wrapped. Then lay two other sticks crosswise on top of your first pair. Strike your match and touch your kindlings. As the fire catches, lay on other pairs of sticks, each pair crosswise to the pair that is below it, until you have a pyramid of flame. This is "a Micmac fire" such as the Indians make in the woods.

Now you can pull off your wading-boots and warm your feet at the blaze. You can toast your bread if you like. You can even make shift to broil one of your trout, fastened on the end of a birch twig if you have a fancy that way. When your hunger is satisfied, you shake out the crumbs for the birds and the squirrels, settle down for an hour's reading if you have a book in your pocket, or for a good talk if you have a comrade with you.

The stream of time flows swift and smooth, by such a fire as this. The moments slip past unheeded; the sun sinks down his western arch; the shadows begin to fall across the brook; it is time

to move on for the afternoon fishing. The fire has almost burned out. But do not trust it too much. Throw some sand over it, or bring a hatful of water from the brook to pour on it, until you are sure that the last glowing ember is extinguished, and nothing but the black coals and the charred ends of the sticks are left.

Even the little friendship-fire must keep the law of the bush. All lights out when their purpose is fulfilled!

IV

ALTARS OF REMEMBRANCE

It is a question that we have often debated, in the informal meetings of our Petrine Club: Which is pleasanter—to fish an old stream or a new one?

The younger members are all for the "fresh woods and pastures new." They speak of the delight of turning off from the high-road into some faintly marked trail; following it blindly through the forest, not knowing how far you have to go; hearing the voice of waters sounding through the woodland; leaving the path impatiently and striking straight across the underbrush; scrambling down a steep bank, pushing through a thicket of alders, and coming out suddenly, face to face with a beautiful, strange brook. It reminds you, of course, of some old friend. It is a little like the

Beaverkill, or the Ausable, or the Gale River. And yet it is different. Every stream has its own character and disposition. Your new acquaintance invites you to a day of discoveries. If the water is high, you will follow it down, and have easy fishing. If the water is low, you will go upstream, and fish "fine and far-off." Every turn in the avenue which the little river has made for you opens up a new view—a rocky gorge where the deep pools are divided by white-footed falls; a lofty forest where the shadows are deep and the trees arch overhead; a flat, sunny stretch where the stream is spread out, and pebbly islands divide the channels, and the big fish are lurking at the sides in the sheltered corners under the bushes. From scene to scene you follow on, delighted and expectant, until the night suddenly drops its veil, and then you will be lucky if you can find your way home in the dark!

Yes, it is all very good, this exploration of new streams. But, for my part, I like still better to go back to a familiar little river, and fish or dream along the banks where I have dreamed and fished before. I know every bend and curve: the sharp turn, where the water runs under the roots of the old hemlock-tree; the snaky glen, where the alders stretch their arms far out across the stream; the meadow reach, where the trout are fat and silvery, and will only rise about sunrise or sundown, unless the day is cloudy; the Naiad's Elbow, where the brook rounds itself, smooth and dimpled, to em-

brace a cluster of pink laurel-bushes. All these I know; yes, and almost every current and eddy and backwater I know long before I come to it. I remember where I caught the big trout the first year I came to the stream; and where I lost a bigger one. I remember the pool where there were plenty of good fish last year, and wonder whether they are there now.

Better things than these I remember: the companions with whom I have followed the stream in days long past; the rendezvous with a comrade at the place where the rustic bridge crosses the brook; the hours of sweet converse beside the friendship-fire; the meeting at twilight with my lady Greygown and the children, who have come down by the wood-road to walk home with me.

Surely it is pleasant to follow an old stream. Flowers grow along its banks which are not to be found anywhere else in the wide world. "There is rosemary, that's for remembrance; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts!"

One May evening, a couple of years since, I was angling in the Swiftwater, and came upon Joseph Jefferson, stretched out on a large rock in midstream, and casting the fly down a long pool. He had passed the threescore years and ten, but he was as eager and as happy as a boy in his fishing.

"You here!" I cried. "What good fortune brought you into these waters?"

"Ah," he answered, "I fished this brook forty-five years ago. It was in the Paradise Valley that

I first thought of Rip Van Winkle. I wanted to come back again, for the sake of old times."

But what has all this to do with an open fire? I will tell you. It is at the places along the stream, where the little flames of love and friendship have been kindled in bygone days, that the past returns most vividly. These are the altars of remembrance.

It is strange how long a small fire will leave its mark. The charred sticks, the black coals, do not decay easily. If they lie well up the bank, out of reach of the spring floods, they will stay there for years. If you have chanced to build a rough fireplace of stones from the brook, it seems almost as if it would last forever.

There is a mossy knoll beneath a great butternut-tree on the Swiftwater where such a fireplace was built four years ago; and whenever I come to that place now I lay the rod aside, and sit down for a little while by the fast-flowing water, and remember.

This is what I see: A man wading up the stream, with a creel over his shoulder, and perhaps a dozen trout in it; two little lads in gray corduroys running down the path through the woods to meet him, one carrying a frying-pan and a kettle, the other with a basket of lunch on his arm. Then I see the bright flames leaping up in the fireplace, and hear the trout sizzling in the pan, and smell the appetizing odor. Now I see the lads coming back across the foot-bridge that spans the stream,

with a bottle of milk from the nearest farmhouse. They are laughing and teetering as they balance along the single plank. Now the table is spread on the moss. How good the lunch tastes! Never were there such pink-fleshed trout, such crisp and savory slices of broiled bacon. Douglas (the beloved doll that the younger lad shamefacedly brings out from the pocket of his jacket) must certainly have some of it. And after the lunch is finished, and the birds' portion has been scattered on the moss, we creep carefully on our hands and knees to the edge of the brook, and look over the bank at the big trout that is poising himself in the amber water. We have tried a dozen times to catch him, but never succeeded. The next time, perhaps——

Well, the fireplace is still standing. The butternut-tree spreads its broad branches above the stream. The violets and the bishopscaps and the wild anemones are sprinkled over the banks. The yellow-throat and the water-thrush and the vireos still sing the same tunes in the thicket. And the elder of the two lads often comes back with me to that pleasant place and shares my fisherman's luck beside the Swiftwater.

But the younger lad?

Ah, my little Barney, you have gone to follow a new stream—clear as crystal—flowing through fields of wonderful flowers that never fade. It is a strange river to Teddy and me; strange and very far away. Some day we shall see it with you;

and you will teach us the names of those blossoms that do not wither. But till then, little Barney, the other lad and I will follow the old stream that flows by the woodland fireplace—your altar.

Rue grows here. Yes, there is plenty of rue. But there is also rosemary, that's for remembrance! And close beside it I see a little heart's-ease.

PART II

SONGS OUT-OF-DOORS

BIRDS IN THE MORNING

THIS is the carol the Robin throws
  Over the edge of the valley;
Listen how boldly it flows,
  Sally on sally:

Tirra-lirra,
Down the river,
Laughing water
All a-quiver.
Day is near,
Clear, clear.
Fish are breaking,
Time for waking.
Tup, tup, tup!
Do you hear?
All clear—
Wake up!

This is the ballad the Bluebird sings,
  Unto his mate replying,
Shaking the tune from his wings
  While he is flying:

Surely, surely, surely,
Life is dear
Even here.
Blue above,
You to love,
Purely, purely, purely.

This is the song the Brown Thrush flings
Out of his thicket of roses;
Hark how it warbles and rings,
Mark how it closes:

Luck, luck,
What luck?
Good enough for me!
I'm alive, you see.
Sun shining,
No repining;
Never borrow
Idle sorrow;
Drop it!
Cover it up!
Hold your cup!
Joy will fill it,
Don't spill it,
Steady, be ready,
Good luck!

THE SONG-SPARROW

THERE is a bird I know so well,
It seems as if he must have sung
Beside my crib when I was young;
Before I knew the way to spell
The name of even the smallest bird,
His gentle-joyful song I heard.
Now see if you can tell, my dear,
What bird it is that, every year,
Sings *"Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer."*

He comes in March, when winds are strong,
And snow returns to hide the earth;
But still he warms his heart with mirth,
And waits for May. He lingers long
While flowers fade; and every day
Repeats his small, contented lay;
As if to say, we need not fear
The season's change, if love is here
With *"Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer."*

He does not wear a Joseph's coat
Of many colors, smart and gay;
His suit is Quaker brown and gray,
With darker patches at his throat.

And yet of all the well-dressed throng
Not one can sing so brave a song.
It makes the pride of looks appear
A vain and foolish thing, to hear
His "*Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer.*"

A lofty place he does not love,
But sits by choice, and well at ease,
In hedges, and in little trees
That stretch their slender arms above
The meadow-brook; and there he sings
Till all the field with pleasure rings;
And so he tells in every ear,
That lowly homes to heaven are near
In "*Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer.*"

I like the tune, I like the words;
They seem so true, so free from art,
So friendly, and so full of heart,
That if but one of all the birds
Could be my comrade everywhere,
My little brother of the air,
This is the one I'd choose, my dear,
Because he'd bless me, every year,
With "*Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer.*"

THE MARYLAND YELLOW-THROAT

While May bedecks the naked trees
With tassels and embroideries,
And many blue-eyed violets beam
Along the edges of the stream,
I hear a voice that seems to say,
Now near at hand, now far away,
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

An incantation so serene,
So innocent, befits the scene:
There's magic in that small bird's note—
See, there he flits—the Yellow-throat;
A living sunbeam, tipped with wings,
A spark of light that shines and sings
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

You prophet with a pleasant name,
If out of Mary-land you came,
You know the way that thither goes
Where Mary's lovely garden grows:
Fly swiftly back to her, I pray,
And try, to call her down this way,
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

Tell her to leave her cockle-shells,
And all her little silver bells
That blossom into melody,
And all her maids less fair than she.
She does not need these pretty things,
For everywhere she comes, she brings
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

The woods are greening overhead,
And flowers adorn each mossy bed;
The waters babble as they run—
One thing is lacking, only one:
If Mary were but here to-day,
I would believe your charming lay,
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

Along the shady road I look—
Who's coming now across the brook?
A woodland maid, all robed in white—
The leaves dance round her with delight,
The stream laughs out beneath her feet—
Sing, merry bird, the charm's complete,
"Witchery—witchery—witchery!"

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

Do you remember, father—
  It seems so long ago—
The day we fished together
  Along the Pocono?
At dusk I waited for you,
  Beside the lumber-mill,
And there I heard a hidden bird
  That chanted, "whip-poor-will!"
  "*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
  Sad and shrill—"*whippoorwill!*"

The place was all deserted;
  The mill-wheel hung at rest;
The lonely star of evening
  Was quivering in the west;
The veil of night was falling;
  The winds were folded still;
And everywhere the trembling air
  Re-echoed "whip-poor-will!"
  "*Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!*"
  Sad and shrill—"*whippoorwill!*"

You seemed so long in coming,
  I felt so much alone;
The wide, dark world was round me,
  And life was all unknown;

The hand of sorrow touched me,
And made my senses thrill
With all the pain that haunts the strain
Of mournful whip-poor-will.
"Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!"
Sad and shrill—*"whippoorwill!"*

What did I know of trouble?
An idle little lad;
I had not learned the lessons
That make men wise and sad.
I dreamed of grief and parting,
And something seemed to fill
My heart with tears, while in my ears
Resounded "whip-poor-will!"
"Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!"
Sad and shrill—*"whippoorwill!"*

'Twas but a shadowy sadness,
That lightly passed away;
But I have known the substance
Of sorrow, since that day.
For nevermore at twilight,
Beside the silent mill,
I'll wait for you, in the falling dew,
And hear the whip-poor-will.
"Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!"
Sad and shrill—*"whippoorwill!"*

But if you still remember,
In that fair land of light,
The pains and fears that touch us
Along this edge of night,

I think all earthly grieving,
And all our mortal ill,
To you must seem like a boy's sad dream,
Who hears the whip-poor-will.
"Whippoorwill! whippoorwill!"
A passing thrill—*"whippoorwill!"*

THE MOCKING-BIRD

In mirth he mocks the other birds at noon,
Catching the lilt of every easy tune;
But when the day departs he sings of love,—
His own wild song beneath the listening moon.

AN ANGLER'S WISH IN TOWN

I

When tulips bloom in Union Square,
And timid breaths of vernal air
  Go wandering down the dusty town,
Like children lost in Vanity Fair;

When every long, unlovely row
Of westward houses stands aglow,
  And leads the eyes toward sunset skies
Beyond the hills where green trees grow;

Then weary seems the street parade,
And weary books, and weary trade;
  I'm only wishing to go a-fishing;
For this the month of May was made.

II

I guess the pussy-willows now
Are creeping out on every bough
  Along the brook; and robins look
For early worms behind the plough.

The thistle-birds have changed their dun,
For yellow coats, to match the sun;
And in the same array of flame
The Dandelion Show's begun.

The flocks of young anemones
Are dancing round the budding trees:
Who can help wishing to go a-fishing
In days as full of joy as these?

III

I think the meadow-lark's clear sound
Leaks upward slowly from the ground,
While on the wing, the bluebirds ring
Their wedding-bells to woods around.

The flirting chewink calls his dear
Behind the bush; and very near,
Where water flows, where green grass grows,
Song-sparrows gently sing, "Good cheer."

And, best of all, through twilight's calm
The hermit-thrush repeats his psalm.
How much I'm wishing to go a-fishing
In days so sweet with music's balm!

IV

'Tis not a proud desire of mine;
I ask for nothing superfine;
No heavy weight, no salmon great,
To break the record, or my line:

Only an idle little stream,
Whose amber waters softly gleam,
Where I may wade, through woodland shade,
And cast the fly, and loaf, and dream:

Only a trout or two, to dart
From foaming pools, and try my art:
No more I'm wishing—old-fashioned fishing,
And just a day on Nature's heart.

THE VEERY

THE moonbeams over Arno's vale in silver flood were pouring,
When first I heard the nightingale a long-lost love deploring.
So passionate, so full of pain, it sounded strange and eerie;
I longed to hear a simpler strain—the wood-notes of the veery.

The laverock sings a bonny lay above the Scottish heather;
It sprinkles down from far away like light and love together;
He drops the golden notes to greet his brooding mate, his dearie;
I only know one song more sweet—the vespers of the veery.

In English gardens, green and bright and full of
fruity treasure,
I heard the blackbird with delight repeat his merry
measure:

The ballad was a pleasant one, the tune was loud
and cheery,
And yet, with every setting sun, I listened for the
veery.

But far away, and far away, the tawny thrush is
singing;
New England woods, at close of day, with that
clear chant are ringing:
And when my light of life is low, and heart and
flesh are weary,
I fain would hear, before I go, the wood-notes of
the veery.

THE RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

I

WHERE's your kingdom, little king?
Where's the land you call your own,
Where's your palace, and your throne?
Fluttering lightly on the wing
Through the blossom-world of May,
Whither lies your royal way?
Where's the realm that owns your sway,
Little king?

Far to northward lies a land,
Where the trees together stand
Closer than the blades of wheat,
When the summer is complete.
Like a robe the forests hide
Lonely vale and mountain side:
Balsam, hemlock, spruce and pine,—
All those mighty trees are mine.
There's a river flowing free;
All its waves belong to me.
There's a lake so clear and bright
Stars shine out of it all night,
And the rowan-berries red
Round it like a girdle spread.
Feasting plentiful and fine,

Air that cheers the heart like wine,
Royal pleasures by the score,
Wait for me in Labrador
There I'll build my dainty nest;
There I'll fix my court and rest;
There from dawn to dark I'll sing:
Happy kingdom! Lucky king!

II

Back again, my little king!
Is your happy kingdom lost
To that rebel knave, Jack Frost?
Have you felt the snow-flakes sting?
Autumn is a rude disrober:
Houseless, homeless in October,
Whither now? Your plight is sober,
Exiled king!

Far to southward lie the regions
Where my loyal flower-legions
Hold possession of the year,
Filling every month with cheer.
Christmas wakes the winter rose;
New Year daffodils unclose;
Yellow jasmine through the woods
Runs in March with golden floods,
Dropping from the tallest trees
Shining streams that never freeze.
Thither I must find my way.
Fly by night and feed by day,

Till I see the southern moon
Glistening on the broad lagoon,
Where the cypress' vivid green,
And the dark magnolia's sheen,
Weave a shelter round my home.
There the snow-storms never come:
There the bannered mosses gray
In the breezes gently sway,
Hanging low on every side
Round the covert where I hide.
There I hold my winter court,
Full of merriment and sport:
There I take my ease and sing:
Happy kingdom! Lucky king!

III

Little boaster, vagrant king!
Neither north nor south is yours:
You've no kingdom that endures.
Wandering every fall and spring,
With your painted crown so slender,
And your talk of royal splendor
Must I call you a Pretender,
Landless king?

Never king by right divine
Ruled a richer realm than mine!
What are lands and golden crowns,
Armies, fortresses and towns,

Jewels, sceptres, robes, and rings,—
What are these to song and wings?
Everywhere that I can fly,
There I own the earth and sky;
Everywhere that I can sing,
There I'm happy as a king.

WINGS OF A DOVE

I

At sunset, when the rosy light was dying
Far down the pathway of the west,
I saw a lonely dove in silence flying,
To be at rest.

Pilgrim of air, I cried, could I but borrow
Thy wandering wings, thy freedom blest,
I'd fly away from every careful sorrow,
And find my rest.

II

But when the dusk a filmy veil was weaving,
Back came the dove to seek her nest
Deep in the forest where her mate was grieving—
There was true rest.

Peace, heart of mine! no longer sigh to wander;
Lose not thy life in fruitless quest.
There are no happy islands over yonder;
Come home and rest.

PART III

STORIES

A FRIEND OF JUSTICE

He was a great dog, thirty inches high at the shoulder; broad-chested, with straight, sinewy legs; and covered with thick, wavy, cream-colored hair from the tips of his short ears to the end of his bushy tail—all except the left side of his face. That was black from ear to nose—coal-black; and in the centre of this storm-cloud his eye gleamed like fire.

How this sinister mark came to him, he never knew. Indeed, it is not likely that he had any idea of the part that it played in his career. The attitude that the world took toward him from the beginning, an attitude of aggressive mistrust—the rôle that he was expected and practically forced to assume in the drama of existence, the rôle of a hero of interminable strife—must have seemed to him altogether mysterious and somewhat absurd. But his part was fixed by the black patch. It gave him an aspect so truculent and forbidding that all the elements of warfare gathered around him as hornets around a sugar barrel, and his appearance in public was like the raising of a flag for battle.

He was called Pichou * because he looked so

* Pronounce this *Pee'shoo*.

ugly and so fierce—just like a lynx—as the French Canadians say, "ugly as a lynx." But in reality he was a dog of orderly and peaceable instincts, with a deep sense of right and wrong, and a great desire to do his duty in the world. He hated meanness and deceit, and was a strong friend of justice and fair-play.

When Pichou's master, Dan Scott, the Hudson Bay agent, first brought him down to Seven Islands as a sledge-dog he found that his work was cut out for him on a generous scale. It is true that at first he had no regular canine labor to perform, for it was summer. Seven months of the year, on the North Shore, a sledge-dog's occupation is gone. He is the idlest creature in the universe.

But Pichou, being a new-comer, had to win his footing in the community; and that was no light task. With the humans it was comparatively easy. At the outset they mistrusted him on account of his looks. Virgile Boulianne asked: "Why did you buy such an ugly dog?" Ovide, who was the wit of the family, said: "I suppose M'sieu' Scott got a present for taking him."

"It's a good dog," said Dan Scott. "Treat him well and he'll treat you well. Kick him and I kick you."

The village decided to accept Pichou at his master's valuation. Moderate friendliness, with precautions, was shown toward him by everybody.

But while the relations with the humans of Seven

Islands were soon established on a fair footing, with the canines Pichou had a very different affair. They were not willing to accept any recommendations as to character. They judged for themselves; and they judged by appearances; and their judgment was utterly hostile to Pichou.

They decided that he was a proud dog, a fierce dog, a bad dog, a fighter. He must do one of two things: stay at home in the yard of the Honorable Hudson Bay Company, which is a thing that no self-respecting dog would do in the summer-time, when codfish heads are strewn along the beach; or fight his way from one end of the village to the other, which Pichou promptly did, leaving enemies behind every fence. Huskies never forget a grudge. They are malignant to the core. Hatred is the wine of cowardly hearts. This is as true of dogs as it is of men.

Then Pichou, having settled his foreign relations, turned his attention to matters at home. There were four other dogs in Dan Scott's team. They did not want Pichou for a leader, and he knew it. They were bitter with jealousy. The black patch was loathsome to them. They treated him disrespectfully, insultingly, grossly. Affairs came to a head when Pécan, a rusty gray dog who had great ambitions and little sense, disputed Pichou's tenure of a certain hambone. Dan Scott looked on placidly while the dispute was terminated. Then he washed the blood and sand from the gashes on Pécan's shoulder, and patted Pichou on the head.

"Good dog," he said. "You're the boss."

There was no further question about Pichou's leadership of the team. But the obedience of his followers was unwilling and sullen. There was no love in it.

He did not shrink from his responsibilities. There were certain reforms in the community which seemed to him of vital importance, and he put them through.

First of all, he made up his mind that there ought to be peace and order on the village street. In the yards of the houses that were strung along it there should be home rule, and every dog should deal with trespassers as he saw fit. Also on the beach, and around the fish-shanties, and under the racks where the cod were drying, the right of the strong jaw should prevail, and differences of opinion should be adjusted in the old-fashioned way. But on the sandy road, bordered with a broken board-walk, which ran between the houses and the beach, courtesy and propriety must be observed. Visitors walked there. Children played there. It was the general promenade. It must be kept peaceful and decent. This was the First Law of the Dogs of Seven Islands: If two dogs quarrel on the street they must go elsewhere to settle it. It was highly unpopular, but Pichou enforced it with his teeth.

The Second Law was equally unpopular: No stealing from the Honorable H. B. Company. If a man bought bacon or corned-beef or any other

delicacy, and stored it in an insecure place, or if he left fish on the beach overnight, his dogs might act according to their inclination. Though Pichou did not understand how honest dogs could steal from their own master, he was willing to admit that this was their affair. His affair was that nobody should steal anything from the Post. It cost him many night-watches, and some large battles to carry it out, but he did it. In the course of time it came to pass that the other dogs kept away from the Post altogether, to avoid temptations; and his own team spent most of their free time wandering about to escape discipline.

The most recalcitrant subjects with whom Pichou had to deal in all these matters were the team of Ovide Boulianne. There were five of them, and up to this time they had been the best team in the village. They had one virtue: under the whip they could whirl a sledge over the snow farther and faster than a horse could trot in a day. But they had innumerable vices. Their leader, Carcajou, had a fleece like a merino ram. But under this coat of innocence he carried a heart so black that he would bite while he was wagging his tail. This smooth devil, and his four followers like unto himself, had sworn relentless hatred to Pichou, and they made his life difficult.

But his great and sufficient consolation for all toils and troubles was the friendship with his master. In the long summer evenings, when Dan Scott was making up his accounts in the store, or

studying his pocket cyclopædia of medicine in the living-room of the Post, with its low beams and mysterious green-painted cupboards, Pichou would lie contentedly at his feet. In the frosty autumnal mornings, when the brant were flocking in the marshes at the head of the bay, they would go out hunting together in a skiff. And who could lie so still as Pichou when the game was approaching? Or who could spring so quickly and joyously to retrieve a wounded bird? But best of all were the long walks on Sunday afternoons, on the yellow beach that stretched away toward the Moisie, or through the fir-forest behind the Pointe des Chasseurs. Then master and dog had fellowship together in silence. To the dumb companion it was like walking with his God in the garden in the cool of the day.

When winter came, and snow fell, and waters froze, Pichou's serious duties began. The long, slim sledge, with its curving prow, and its runners of whalebone, was put in order. The harness of caribou-hide was repaired and strengthened. The dogs, even the most vicious of them, rejoiced at the prospect of doing the one thing that they could do best. Each one strained at his trace as if he would drag the sledge alone. Then the long tandem was straightened out, Dan Scott took his place on the low seat, cracked his whip, shouted, and the equipage darted along the snowy track like a fifty-foot arrow.

Pichou was in the lead, and he showed his mettle

from the start. No need of the terrible whip to lash him forward or to guide his course. A word was enough. "Hoc! Hoc! Hoc!" and he swung to the right, avoiding an air-hole. "Re-re! Re-re!" and he veered to the left, dodging a heap of broken ice. At the end of the day's run—thirty, forty, fifty miles—the dogs got their food for the day, one dried fish apiece; and at noon the next day, reckless of bleeding feet, they flew back over the same track, and broke their fast at Seven Islands before eight o'clock. The ration was the same, a single fish; always the same, except when it was varied by a cube of ancient, evil-smelling, potent whale's flesh, which a dog can swallow at a single gulp. Yet the dogs of the North Shore are never so full of vigor, courage, and joy of life as when the sledges are running. It is in summer, when food is plenty and work slack, that they sicken and die.

Pichou's leadership of his team became famous. Under his discipline the other dogs developed speed and steadiness. One day they made the distance to the Godbout in a single journey, a wonderful run of over eighty miles. But they loved their leader no better, though they followed him faster. And as for the other teams, especially Carcajou's, they were still firm in their deadly hatred for the dog with the black patch.

It was in the second winter after Pichou's coming to Seven Islands that the great trial of his courage arrived. Late in February an Indian run-

ner on snow-shoes staggered into the village. He brought news from the hunting-parties that were wintering far up on the Ste. Marguérite—good news and bad. First, they had already made a good hunting: for the furs, that is to say. They had killed many otter, some fisher and beaver, and four silver foxes—a marvel of fortune. But then, for the food, the chase was bad, very bad—no caribou, no hare, no ptarmigan, nothing for many days. Provisions were very low. There were six families together. Then *la grippe* had taken hold of them. They were sick, starving. They would probably die, at least most of the women and children. It was a bad job.

Dan Scott had peculiar ideas of his duty toward the savages. He was not romantic, but he liked to do the square thing. Besides, he had been reading up on *la grippe*, and he had some new medicine for it, capsules from Montreal, very powerful—quinine, phenacetine, and morphine. He was as eager to try this new medicine as a boy is to fire off a new gun. He loaded the sledge with provisions and the medicine-chest with capsules, harnessed his team, and started up the river. Thermometer thirty degrees below zero; air like crystal; snow six feet deep on the level.

The first day's journey was slow, for the going was soft, and the track, at places, had to be broken out with snow-shoes. Camp was made at the foot of the big fall—a hole in snow, a bed of boughs, a hot fire, and a blanket stretched on a couple of

sticks to reflect the heat, the dogs on the other side of the fire, and Pichou close to his master.

In the morning there was the steep hill beside the fall to climb, alternately soft and slippery, now a slope of glass and now a treacherous drift of yielding feathers; it was a road set on end. But Pichou flattened his back and strained his loins and dug his toes into the snow and would not give back an inch. When the rest of the team balked the long whip slashed across their backs and recalled them to their duty. At last their leader topped the ridge, and the others struggled after him. Before them stretched the great dead-water of the river, a straight white path to No-man's-land. The snow was smooth and level, and the crust was hard enough to bear. Pichou settled down to his work at a glorious pace. He seemed to know that he must do his best, and that something important depended on the quickness of his legs. On through the glittering solitude, on through the death-like silence, sped the sledge, between the interminable walls of the forest, past the mouths of nameless rivers, under the shadow of grim mountains. At noon Dan Scott boiled the kettle, and ate his bread and bacon. But there was nothing for the dogs, not even for Pichou; for discipline is discipline, and the best of sledge-dogs will not run well after he has been fed.

Then forward again, along the lifeless road; slowly over rapids, where the ice was rough and broken; swiftly over still waters, where the way

was level; until they came to the foot of the last lake, and camped for the night. The Indians were but a few miles away, at the head of the lake, and it would be easy to reach them in the morning.

But there was another camp on the Ste. Marguérite that night, and it was nearer to Dan Scott than the Indians were. Ovide Boulianne had followed him up the river, close on his track, which made the going easier.

"Does that Hudson Bay fellow suppose that I allow him all that *pelletrie* to himself and the Company? Four silver fox, besides otter and beaver? No, thank you! I take some provision, and some whiskey. I go to make trade also." Thus spoke the shrewd Ovide, proving that commerce is no less daring, no less resolute, than philanthropy. The only difference is in the motive, and that is not always visible. Ovide camped the second night at a bend of the river, a mile below the foot of the lake. Between him and Dan Scott there was a hill covered with a dense thicket of spruce.

By what magic did Carcajou know that Pichou, his old enemy, was so near him in that vast wilderness of white death? By what mysterious language did he communicate his knowledge to his companions and stir the sleeping hatred in their hearts and mature the conspiracy of revenge?

Pichou, sleeping by the fire, was awakened by the fall of a lump of snow from the branch of a shaken evergreen. That was nothing. But there were other sounds in the forest, faint, stealthy, in-

audible to an ear less keen than his. He crept out of the shelter and looked into the wood. He could see shadowy forms, stealing among the trees, gliding down the hill. Five of them. Wolves, doubtless! He must guard the provisions. By this time the rest of his team were awake. Their eyes glittered. They stirred uneasily. But they did not move from the dying fire. It was no concern of theirs what their leader chose to do out of hours. In the traces they would follow him, but there was no loyalty in their hearts. Pichou stood alone by the sledge, waiting for the wolves.

But these were no wolves. They were assassins. Like a company of soldiers, they lined up together and rushed silently down the slope. Like lightning they leaped upon the solitary dog and struck him down. In an instant, before Dan Scott could throw off his blanket and seize the loaded butt of his whip, Pichou's throat and breast were torn to rags, his life-blood poured upon the snow, and his murderers were slinking away, slavering and muttering through the forest.

Dan Scott knelt beside his best friend. At a glance he saw that the injury was fatal. "Well done, Pichou!" he murmured, "you fought a good fight."

And the dog, by a brave effort, lifted the head with the black patch on it, for the last time, licked his master's hand, and then dropped back upon the snow—contented, happy, dead.

There is but one drawback to a dog's friendship. It does not last long enough.

THE THRILLING MOMENT

EVERY moment of life, I suppose, is more or less of a turning-point. Opportunities are swarming around us all the time thicker than gnats at sundown. We walk through a cloud of chances, and if we were always conscious of them they would worry us almost to death. Only now and then, by way of special excitement, we see how delicately our fortune is poised and balanced on the pivot of a single incident, and then we call our experience a crisis, a thrilling moment.

One of these came to me in the autumn of 1894, on the banks of the Unpronounceable River, in the Province of Quebec. It was the last day of the open season for land-locked salmon, and we had set our hearts on catching some good fish to take home with us. We walked up from the mouth of the river, four preposterously long and rough miles, to a famous fishing-pool. It was a noble day for walking; the air was clear and crisp, and all the hills around us were glowing with the crimson foliage of those little bushes which God created to make burned lands look beautiful. The trail ended in a precipitous gully, down which we scrambled with high hopes, and fishing-rods unbroken, only

to find that the river was in a condition which made angling absurd if not impossible.

There must have been a cloud-burst among the mountains, for the water was coming down in a flood. The stream was bank-full, gurgling and eddying out among the bushes, and rushing over the shoal where the fish used to lie, in a brown torrent ten feet deep. Our last day with the salmon seemed destined to be a failure, and we must wait eight months before we could have another. There were three of us in the disappointment, and we shared it according to our temperaments.

Paul virtuously resolved not to give up while there was a chance left, and wandered down-stream to look for an eddy where he might pick up a small fish. Ferdinand, our guide, resigned himself without a sigh to the consolation of eating blueberries, which he always did with great cheerfulness. But I, being more cast down than either of my comrades, sought out a convenient seat among the rocks, and, adapting my anatomy as well as possible to the irregularities of Nature's upholstery, settled down to read myself into a Christian frame of mind.

Before beginning, my eyes roved sadly over the pool once more. It was but a casual glance. It lasted only for an instant. But in that fortunate fragment of time I distinctly saw the broad tail of a big fish rise and disappear in the swift water at the very head of the pool.

Immediately the whole aspect of affairs was

changed. Despondency vanished, and the river glittered with the beams of rising hope.

I said nothing to my companions. It would have been unkind to disturb them with expectations which might never be realized. My immediate duty was to get within casting distance of that salmon as soon as possible.

The way along the shore of the pool was difficult. The bank was very steep, and the rocks by the river's edge were broken and glibbery. Presently I came to a sheer wall of stone, perhaps thirty feet high, rising directly from the deep water.

There was a tiny ledge or crevice running part of the way across the face of this wall, and by this four-inch path I edged along, holding my rod in one hand and clinging affectionately with the other to such clumps of grass and little bushes as I could find. There was one small huckleberry plant to which I had a particular attachment.

The ledge in the rock soon came to an end. But below me in the pool there was a sunken reef, and on this reef a long log had caught, with one end sticking out of the water, within jumping distance. It was the only chance. To go back would have been dangerous. An angler with a large family dependent upon him for support has no right to incur unnecessary perils.

Besides, the fish was waiting for me at the upper end of the pool!

So I jumped, landed on the end of the log, felt it settle slowly down, ran along it like a small boy

on a seesaw, and leaped off into shallow water just as the log rolled from the ledge and lunged out into the stream.

I watched it with interest and congratulated myself that I was no longer embarked upon it. On that craft a voyage down the Unpronounceable River would have been short but far from merry. The "all ashore" bell was not rung early enough. I just got off, with not half a second to spare.

But now all was well, for I was within reach of the fish. A little scrambling over the rocks brought me to a point where I could easily cast over him. He was lying in a swift, smooth, narrow channel between two large stones. It was a snug resting-place, and no doubt he would remain there for some time. So I took out my fly-book and prepared to angle for him according to the approved rules of the art.

I carefully tested a brand-new leader, and attached it to the line with great deliberation and the proper knot. Then I gave my whole mind to the important question of a wise selection of flies.

It is astonishing how much time and mental anxiety a man can spend on an apparently simple question like this. When you are buying flies in a shop it seems as if you never had half enough. You keep on picking out a half-dozen of each new variety as fast as the enticing salesman shows them to you. You stroll through the streets of Montreal or Quebec and drop in at every fishing-tackle dealer's to see whether you can find a few more good

flies. Then, when you come to look over your collection at the critical moment on the bank of a stream, it seems as if you had ten times too many. And, spite of all, the precise fly that you need is not there.

You select a couple that you think fairly good, lay them down beside you in the grass, and go on looking through the book for something better. Failing to satisfy yourself, you turn to pick up those that you have laid out, and find that they have mysteriously vanished from the face of the earth.

Then you struggle with naughty words and relapse into a condition of mental palsy.

The best thing to do in such a case is to adopt some abstract theory of action without delay, and put it into practice without hesitation. Then if you fail, you can throw the responsibility on the theory.

Now, in regard to flies there are two theories. The old, conservative theory is, that on a bright day you should use a dark, dull fly, because it is less conspicuous. So I followed that theory first and put on a Great Dun and a Dark Montreal. I cast them delicately over the fish, but he would not look at them.

Then I went over to the new, radical theory which says that on a bright day you must use a light, gay fly, because it is more in harmony with the sky, and therefore less noticeable. Accordingly I put on a Professor and a Parmacheene Belle; but

this combination of learning and beauty had no attraction for the salmon.

Then I fell back on a theory of my own, to the effect that the salmon have an aversion to red, and prefer yellow and brown. So I tried various combinations of flies in which these colors predominated.

Then I abandoned all theories and went straight through my book, trying something from every page, and winding up with that lure which the guides consider infallible—"a Jock o' Scott that cost fifty cents at Quebec." But it was all in vain. I was ready to despair.

At this psychological moment I heard behind me a voice of hope—the song of a grasshopper: not one of those fat-legged, green-winged imbeciles that feebly tumble in the summer fields, but a game grasshopper—one of those thin-shanked, brown-winged fellows that leap like kangaroos, and fly like birds, and sing *Kri-karee-karee-kri* in their flight.

It is not really a song, I know, but it sounds like one; and, if you had heard that Kri-karee carolling as I chased him over the rocks, you would have been sure that he was mocking me.

I believed that he was the predestined lure for that salmon; but it was hard to persuade him to fulfil his destiny. I slapped at him with my hat, but he was not there. I grasped at him on the bushes, and brought away "nothing but leaves." At last he made his way to the very edge of the

water and poised himself on a stone, with his legs well tucked in for a long leap and a bold flight to the other side of the river. It was my final opportunity. I made a desperate grab at it and caught the grasshopper.

My premonition proved to be correct. When that Kri-karee, invisibly attached to my leader, went floating down the stream, the salmon was surprised. It was the fourteenth of September, and he had supposed the grasshopper season was over. The unexpected temptation was too strong for him. He rose with a rush, and in an instant I was fast to the best land-locked salmon of the year.

But the situation was not without its embarrassments. My rod weighed only four and a quarter ounces; the fish weighed between six and seven pounds. The water was furious and headstrong. I had only thirty yards of line and no landing-net.

"*Holà! Ferdinand!*" I cried. "*Bring the net, quick! A beauty! Hurry up!*"

I thought it must be an hour while he was making his way over the hill, through the underbrush, around the cliff. Again and again the fish ran out my line almost to the last turn. A dozen times he leaped from the water, shaking his silvery sides. Twice he tried to cut the leader across a sunken ledge. But at last he was played out, and came in quietly toward the point of the rock. At the same moment Ferdinand appeared with the net.

Now, the use of the net is really the most difficult part of angling. And Ferdinand is the best

The situation was not without its embarrassments.

netsman in the Lake St. John country. He never makes the mistake of trying to scoop a fish in motion. He does not grope around with aimless, futile strokes as if he were feeling for something in the dark. He does not entangle the dropper-fly in the net and tear the tail-fly out of the fish's mouth. He does not get excited.

He quietly sinks the net in the water, and waits until he can see the fish distinctly, lying perfectly still and within reach. Then he makes a swift movement, like that of a mower swinging the scythe, takes the fish into the net head first, and lands him without a slip.

I felt sure that Ferdinand was going to do the trick in precisely this way with my salmon. Just at the right instant he made one quick, steady swing of the arms, and—the head of the net broke clean off the handle and went floating away with the fish in it!

All seemed to be lost. But Ferdinand was equal to the occasion. He seized a long, crooked stick that lay in a pile of driftwood on the shore, sprang into the water up to his waist, caught the net as it drifted past, and dragged it to land, with the ultimate salmon, the prize of the season, still glittering through its meshes.

This is the story of my most thrilling moment as an angler.

But which was the moment of the deepest thrill?

Was it when the huckleberry bush saved me from a watery grave, or when the log rolled under my

feet and started down the river? Was it when the fish rose, or when the net broke, or when the long stick captured it?

No, it was none of these. It was when the Krikaree sat with his legs tucked under him on the brink of the stream. That was the turning-point. The fortunes of the day depended on the comparative quickness of the reflex action of his nerves and mine. That was the thrilling moment.

I see it now. A crisis is really the commonest thing in the world. The reason why life sometimes seems dull to us is because we do not perceive the importance and the excitement of getting bait.

THE KEEPER OF THE LIGHT

I

WHEN the light-house was built, many years ago, the Isle of the Wise Virgin had another name. It was called the Isle of Birds. Thousands of sea-fowl nested there. The handful of people who lived on the shore robbed the nests and slaughtered the birds, with considerable profit. It was perceived in advance that the building of the light-house would interfere with this, and with other things. Hence it was not altogether a popular improvement. Marcel Thibault, the oldest inhabitant, was the leader of the opposition.

"That light-house!" said he, "what good will it be for us? We know the way in and out when it makes clear weather, by day or by night. But when the sky gets cloudy, when it makes fog, then we stay with ourselves at home. We know the way. What? The stranger boats? The stranger boats need not to come here, if they know not the way. The more fish, the more seals, the more everything will there be left for us. Just because of the stranger boats, to build something that makes all the birds wild and spoils the hunting—that is

a fool's work. The good God made no stupid light on the Isle of Birds. He saw no necessity of it.

"Besides," continued Thibault, puffing slowly at his pipe, "besides—those stranger boats, sometimes they are lost, they come ashore. It is sad! But who gets the things that are saved, all sorts of things, good to put into our houses, good to eat, good to sell, sometimes a boat that can be patched up almost like new—who gets these things, eh? Doubtless those for whom the good God intended them. But who shall get them when this light-house is built, eh? Tell me that, you Baptiste Fortin."

Fortin represented the party of progress in the little parliament of the beach. He had come down from Quebec some years ago, bringing with him a wife and two little daughters, and a good many new notions about life. He had good luck at the cod-fishing, and built a house with windows at the side as well as in front. When his third girl, Nataline, was born, he went so far as to paint the house red, and put on a kitchen, and enclose a bit of ground for a yard. This marked him as a radical, an innovator. It was expected that he would defend the building of the light-house. And he did.

"Monsieur Thibault," he said, "you talk well, but you talk too late. It is of a past age, your talk. A new time comes to the North Shore. We begin to civilize ourselves. To hold back against the light would be our shame. This light-house means good: good for us, and good for all who come to

this coast. It will bring more trade to us. It will bring a boat with the mail, with newspapers, perhaps once, perhaps twice a month, all through the summer. It will bring us into the great world. To lose that for the sake of a few birds would be a pity. Besides, it is impossible. The light-house is coming, certain."

Fortin was right, of course.

The light-house arrived. It was a very good house for that day. The keeper's dwelling had three rooms and was solidly built. The tower was thirty feet high. The lantern held a revolving light, and once every minute it was turned by clock-work, flashing a broad belt of radiance fifteen miles across the sea. All night long that big bright eye was opening and shutting. "Look!" said Thibault, "it winks like a one-eyed Windigo."

The Department of Marine and Fisheries sent down an expert from Quebec to keep the light in order and run it for the first summer. He took Fortin as his assistant. By the end of August he reported to headquarters that the light was all right, and that Fortin was qualified to be appointed keeper. Before October was out the certificate of appointment came back, and the expert packed his bag to go up the river.

"Now look here, Fortin," said he, "this is no fishing trip. Do you think you are up to this job?"

"I suppose," said Fortin.

"Well now, do you remember all this business about the machinery that turns the lantern? That's

the main thing. The bearings must be kept well oiled, and the weight must never get out of order. The clock-face will tell you when it is running right. If anything gets hitched up, here's the crank to keep it going until you can straighten the machine again. It's easy enough to turn it. But you must never let it stop between dark and daylight. The regular turn once a minute—that's the mark of this light. If it shines steady it might as well be out. Yes, better! Any vessel coming along here in a dirty night and seeing a fixed light would take it for the Cape Seal and run ashore. This particular light has got to revolve once a minute every night from April first to December tenth, certain. Can you do it?"

"Certain," said Fortin.

"That's the way I like to hear a man talk! Now, you've got oil enough to last you through till the tenth of December, when you close the light, and to run on for a month in the spring after you open again. The ice may be late in going out and perhaps the supply-boat can't get down before the middle of April, or thereabouts. But she'll bring plenty of oil when she comes, so you'll be all right."

"All right," said Fortin.

"Well, I've said it all, I guess. You understand what you've got to do? Good-by and good luck. You're the keeper of the light now."

"Good luck," said Fortin, "I am going to keep it."

The same day he shut up the red house on the beach and moved to the white house on the island

with Marie-Anne, his wife, and the three girls, Alma, aged seventeen, Azilda, aged fifteen, and Nataline, aged thirteen. He was the captain, and Marie-Anne was the mate, and the three girls were the crew. They were all as full of happy pride as if they had come into possession of a great fortune.

It was the thirty-first day of October. A snow-shower had silvered the island. The afternoon was clear and beautiful. As the sun sloped toward the rose-colored hills of the mainland the whole family stood out in front of the light-house looking up at the tower.

"Regard him well, my children," said Baptiste; "God has given him to us to keep, and to keep us. Thibault says he is a Windigo. Well! We shall see that he is a friendly Windigo. Every minute all the night he shall wink, just for kindness and good luck to all the world, till the daylight."

II

On the ninth of November, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Baptiste went into the tower to see that the clock-work was in order for the night. He set the dial on the machine, put a few drops of oil on the bearings of the cylinder, and started to wind up the weight.

It rose a few inches, gave a dull click, and then stopped dead. He tugged a little harder, but it

would not move. Then he tried to let it down. He pushed at the lever that set the clock-work in motion.

Then it dawned fearfully upon him that something must be wrong. Trembling with anxiety, he climbed up and peered in among the wheels.

The escapement wheel was cracked clean through, as if someone had struck it with the head of an axe, and one of the pallets of the spindle was stuck fast in the crack. He could knock it out easily enough, but when the crack came around again the pallet would catch and the clock would stop once more. It was a fatal injury.

No matter how the injury to the clock-work was done. No matter who was to be blamed or punished for it. That could wait. The question now was whether the light would fail or not. And it must be answered within a quarter of an hour.

"Marie-Anne! Alma!" he shouted, "all of you! To me, in the tower!"

He was up in the lantern when they came running in, full of curiosity, excited, asking twenty questions at once. Nataline climbed up the ladder and put her head through the trap-door.

"What is it?" she panted. "What has hap——"

"Go down," answered her father, "go down all at once. Wait for me. I am coming. I will explain."

The explanation was not altogether lucid and scientific. There were some bad words mixed up with it.

Baptiste was still hot with anger and the unsatisfied desire to whip somebody, he did not know whom, for something, he did not know what. But angry as he was, he was still sane enough to hold his mind hard and close to the main point. The crank must be adjusted; the machine must be ready to turn before dark. While he worked he hastily made the situation clear to his listeners.

That crank must be turned by hand, round and round all night, not too slow, not too fast. The dial on the machine must mark time with the clock on the wall. The light must flash once every minute until daybreak. He would do as much of the labor as he could, but the wife and the two older girls must help him. Nataline could go to bed.

At this Nataline's short upper lip trembled. She rubbed her eyes with the sleeve of her dress, and began to weep silently.

"What is the matter with you?" said her mother; "bad child, have you fear to sleep alone? A big girl like you!"

"No," she sobbed, "I have no fear, but I want some of the fun."

"Fun!" growled her father. "What fun? She calls this fun!" He looked at her for a moment, as she stood there, half-defiant, half-despondent, with her red mouth quivering and her big brown eyes sparkling fire; then he burst into a hearty laugh.

"Come here, my little wild-cat," he said, drawing her to him and kissing her; "you are a good

girl after all. I suppose you think this light is part yours, eh?"

The girl nodded.

"Well! You shall have your share, fun and all. You shall make the tea for us and bring us something to eat. Perhaps when Alma and 'Zilda fatigue themselves they will permit a few turns of the crank to you. Are you content? Run now and boil the kettle."

It was a very long night. No matter how easily a handle turns, after a certain number of revolutions there is a stiffness about it. The stiffness is not in the handle, but in the hand that pushes it.

Round and round, evenly, steadily, minute after minute, hour after hour, shoving out, drawing in, circle after circle, no swerving, no stopping, no varying the motion, turn after turn—fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven—what's the use of counting? Watch the dial; go to sleep—no! for God's sake, no sleep! But how hard it is to keep awake! How heavy the arm grows, how stiffly the muscles move, how the will creaks and groans! It is not easy for a human being to become part of a machine.

Fortin himself took the longest spell at the crank, of course. He went at his work with a rigid courage. His red-hot anger had cooled down into a shape that was like a bar of forged steel. He meant to make that light revolve if it killed him to do it. He was the captain of a company that had run into an ambuscade. He was going to fight his way through if he had to fight alone.

The wife and the two older girls followed him blindly and bravely, in the habit of sheer obedience. They did not quite understand the meaning of the task, the honor of victory, the shame of defeat. But Fortin said it must be done, and he knew best. So they took their places in turn, as he grew weary, and kept the light flashing.

And Nataline—well, there is no way of describing what Nataline did, except to say that she played the fife.

She felt the contest just as her father did, not as deeply, perhaps, but in the same spirit. She went into the fight with darkness like a little soldier. And she played the fife.

When she came up from the kitchen with the smoking pail of tea, she rapped on the door and called out to know whether the Windigo was at home to-night.

She ran in and out of the place like a squirrel. She looked up at the light and laughed. Then she ran in and reported. "He winks," she said, "old one-eye winks beautifully. Keep him going. My turn now!"

She refused to be put off with a shorter spell than the other girls. "No," she cried, "I can do it as well as you. You think you are so much older. Well, what of that? The light is part mine; father said so. Let me turn."

When the first glimmer of the little day came shivering along the eastern horizon, Nataline was at the crank. The mother and the two older girls

were half-asleep. Baptiste stepped out to look at the sky. "Come," he cried, returning. "We can stop now, it is growing gray in the east, almost morning."

"But not yet," said Nataline; "we must wait for the first red. A few more turns. Let's finish it up with a song."

She shook her head and piped up the refrain of an old Canadian ballad. And to that cheerful music the first night's battle was carried through to victory.

The next day Fortin spent two hours in trying to repair the clock-work. It was of no use. The broken part was indispensable and could not be replaced.

At noon he went over to the main-land to tell of the disaster, and perhaps to find out if any hostile hand was responsible for it. He found out nothing. Everyone denied all knowledge of the accident. Perhaps there was a flaw in the wheel; perhaps it had broken itself. That was possible. Fortin could not deny it; but the thing that hurt him most was that he got so little sympathy. Nobody seemed to care whether the light was kept burning or not. When he told them how the machine had been turned all night by hand, they were astonished. "Thunder!" they cried, "you must have had great misery to do that." But that he proposed to go on doing it for a month longer, until December tenth, and to begin again on April first, and go on turning the light by hand for three or four weeks more until the supply-boat came

down and brought the necessary tools to repair the machine—such an idea as this went beyond their horizon.

"But you are crazy, Baptiste," they said; "you can never do it; you are not capable."

"I would be crazy," he answered, "if I did not see what I must do. That light is my charge. In all the world there is nothing else so great as that for me and for my family—you understand? For us it is the chief thing. It is my Ten Commandments. I shall keep it."

After a while he continued: "I want someone to help me with the work on the island. We must be up all the nights now. By day we must get some sleep. I want another man or a strong boy. Is there any who will come? The Government will pay. Or if not, I will pay, myself."

This appeal was of no avail until Thibault's youngest son, Marcel, a well-grown boy of sixteen, volunteered.

So the little Marcel was enlisted in the crew on the island. For thirty nights those six people—a man, and a boy, and four women (Nataline was not going to submit to any distinctions on the score of age, you may be sure)—for a full month they turned their flashing lantern by hand from dusk to daybreak.

The fog, the frost, the hail, the snow beleaguered their tower. Hunger and cold, sleeplessness and weariness, pain and discouragement, held rendezvous in that dismal, cramped little room. Many a

night Nataline's fife of fun played a feeble, wheezy note. But it played. And the crank went round. And every bit of glass in the lantern was as clear as polished crystal. And the big lamp was full of oil. And the great eye of the friendly giant winked without ceasing, through fierce storm and placid moonlight.

When the tenth of December came, the light went to sleep for the winter, and the keepers took their way across the ice to the main-land. They had won the battle, not only on the island, fighting against the elements, but also at Dead Men's Point, against public opinion. The inhabitants began to understand that the light-house meant something—a law, an order, a principle.

When the time arrived to kindle the light again in the spring, Fortin could have had anyone that he wanted to help him. But no; he chose the little Marcel again; the boy wanted to go, and he had earned the right. Besides, he and Nataline had struck up a close friendship on the island, cemented during the winter by various hunting excursions after hares and ptarmigan. Marcel was a skilful setter of snares. But Nataline was not content until she had won consent to borrow her father's rifle. They hunted in partnership. One day they had shot a fox. That is, Nataline had shot it, though Marcel had seen it first and tracked it. Now they wanted to try for a seal on the point of the island when the ice went out. It was quite essential that Marcel should go.

But there was not much play in the spring session with the light on the island. It was a bitter job. December had been lamb-like compared with April. First, the southeast wind kept the ice driving in along the shore. Then the northwest wind came hurtling down from the Arctic wilderness like a pack of wolves. There was a snow-storm of four days and nights that made the whole world—earth and sky and sea—look like a crazy white chaos. And through it all, that weary, dogged crank must be kept turning—turning from dark to daylight.

It seemed as if the supply-boat would never come. At last they saw it, one fair afternoon, April the twenty-ninth, creeping slowly down the coast. They were just getting ready for another night's work.

Fortin ran out of the tower, took off his hat, and began to say his prayers. The wife and the two elder girls stood in the kitchen door, crossing themselves, with tears in their eyes. Marcel and Nataline were coming up from the point of the island, where they had been watching for their seal. She was singing. When she saw the boat she stopped short for a minute.

"Well," she said, "they find us awake. And if they don't come faster than that we'll have another chance to show them how we make the light wink, eh?"

Then she went on with her song.

III

Nataline grew up like a young birch-tree—stately and strong, good to look at. She was beautiful in her place; she fitted it exactly. Her bronzed face with an under-tinge of red; her low, black eyebrows; her clear eyes like the brown waters of a woodland stream; her dark, curly hair with little tendrils always blowing loose around the pillar of her neck; her broad breast and sloping shoulders; her firm, fearless step; her voice, rich and vibrant; her straight, steady looks—but there, who can describe a thing like that? I tell you she was a girl to love out-of-doors.

There was nothing that she could not do. She could cook; she could swing an axe; she could paddle a canoe; she could fish; she could shoot; and, best of all, she could run the light-house. Her father's devotion to it had gone into her blood. It was the centre of her life, her law of God. There was nothing about it that she did not understand and love. She lived by it and for it.

There were no more accidents to the clock-work after the first one was repaired. It ran on regularly, year after year.

Alma and Azilda were married and went away to live, one on the South Shore, the other at Quebec. Nataline was her father's right-hand man. As the rheumatism took hold of him and lamed his shoulders and wrists, more and more of the work fell upon her. She was proud of it.

At last it came to pass, one day in January, that Baptiste died. The men dug through the snow behind the tiny chapel at Dead Men's Point, and made a grave for him, and the young priest of the mission read the funeral service over it.

It went without saying that Nataline was to be the keeper of the light, at least until the supply-boat came down again in the spring and orders arrived from the Government in Quebec. Why not? She was a woman, it is true. But if a woman can do a thing as well as a man, why should she not do it? Besides, Nataline could do this particular thing much better than any man on the Point. Everybody approved of her as the heir of her father, especially young Marcel Thibault.

What?

Yes, of course. You could not help guessing it. He was Nataline's lover. They were to be married the next summer. They sat together in the best room, while the old mother was rocking to and fro and knitting beside the kitchen stove, and talked of what they were going to do. Their talk was mainly of the future, because they were young, and of the light, because Nataline's life belonged to it.

That winter was a bad one on the North Shore, and particularly at Dead Men's Point. It was terribly bad. The summer before, the fishing had been almost a dead failure. In June a wild storm had smashed all the salmon nets and swept most of them away. In July they could find no caplin

for bait for the cod-fishing, and in August and September they could find no cod. The few bushels of potatoes that some of the inhabitants had planted rotted in the ground. The people at the Point went into the winter short of money and very short of food.

There were some supplies at the store, pork and flour and molasses, and they could run through the year on credit and pay their debts the following summer if the fish came back. But this resource also failed them. In the last week of January the store caught fire and burned up. Nothing was saved. The only hope now was the seal-hunting in February and March and April. That at least would bring them meat and oil enough to keep them from starvation.

But this hope failed, too. The winds blew strong from the north and west, driving the ice far out into the gulf. The chase was long and perilous. The seals were few and wild. Less than a dozen were killed in all. By the last week in March Dead Men's Point stood face to face with famine.

Then it was that old Thibault had an idea.

"There is sperm oil on the Island of Birds," said he, "in the light-house, plenty of it, gallons of it. It is not very good to taste, perhaps, but what of that? It will keep life in the body. The Esquimaux drink it in the north, often. We must take the oil of the light-house to keep us from starving until the supply-boat comes down."

"But how shall we get it?" asked the others.

"I am the keeper of the light."

"It is locked up. Nataline Fortin has the key. Will she give it?"

"Give it?" growled Thibault. "Name of a name! of course she will give it. She must. Is not a life, the life of all of us, more than a light?"

A self-appointed committee of three, with Thibault at the head, waited upon Nataline without delay, told her their plan, and asked for the key. She thought it over silently for a few minutes, and then refused point-blank.

"No," she said, "I will not give the key. That oil is for the lamp. If you take it, the lamp will not be lighted on the first of April; it will not be burning when the supply-boat comes. For me, that would be shame, disgrace, worse than death. I am the keeper of the light. You shall not have the oil."

They argued with her, pleaded with her, tried to browbeat her. She was a rock. Her round underjaw was set like a steel trap. Her lips straightened into a white line. Her eyebrows drew together, and her eyes grew black.

"No," she cried, "I tell you no, no, a thousand times no. All in this house I will share with you. But not one drop of what belongs to the light! Never!"

Later in the afternoon the priest came to see her; a thin, pale young man, bent with the hardships of his life, and with sad dreams in his sunken eyes. He talked with her very gently and kindly.

"Think well, my daughter; think seriously what

you do. Is it not our first duty to save human life? Surely that must be according to the will of God. Will you refuse to obey it?"

Nataline was trembling a little now. Her brows were unlocked. The tears stood in her eyes and ran down her cheeks. She was twisting her hands together.

"My father," she answered, "I desire to do the will of God. But how shall I know it? Is it not His first command that we should serve Him faithfully in the duty which He has given us? He gave me this light to keep. My father kept it. He is dead. If I am unfaithful what will he say to me? Besides, the supply-boat is coming soon—I have thought of this—when it comes it will bring food. But if the light is out, the boat may be lost. That would be the punishment for my sin. No, we must trust God. He will keep the people. I will keep the light."

The priest looked at her long and steadily. A glow came into his face. He put his hand on her shoulder. "You shall follow your conscience," he said quietly. "Peace be with you, Nataline."

That evening just at dark Marcel came. She let him take her in his arms and kiss her. She felt like a little child, tired and weak.

"Well," he whispered, "you have done bravely, sweetheart. You were right not to give the key. That would have been a shame to you. But it is all settled now. They will have the oil without your fault. To-night they are going out to the

light-house to break in and take what they want. You need not know. There will be no blame——"

She straightened in his arms as if an electric shock had passed through her. She sprang back, blazing with anger.

"What?" she cried, "me a thief by roundabout —with my hand behind my back and my eyes shut? Never. Do you think I care only for the blame? I tell you that is nothing. My light shall not be robbed, never, never!"

She came close to him and took him by the shoulders. Their eyes were on a level. He was a strong man, but she was the stronger then.

"Marcel Thibault," she said, "do you love me?"

"My faith," he gasped, "I do. You know I do."

"Then listen," she continued; "this is what you are going to do. You are going down to the shore at once to make ready the big canoe. I am going to get food enough to last us for the month. It will be a hard pinch, but it will do. Then we are going out to the island to-night, in less than an hour. Day after to-morrow is the first of April. Then we shall light the lantern, and it shall burn every night until the boat comes down. You hear? Now go: and be quick: and bring your gun."

IV

They pushed off in the black darkness, among the fragments of ice that lay along the shore. They crossed the strait in silence, and hid their canoe among the rocks on the island. They carried their stuff up to the house and locked it in the kitchen. Then they unlocked the tower, and went in, Marcel with his shot-gun, and Nataline with her father's old rifle. They fastened the door again, and bolted it, and sat down in the dark to wait.

Presently they heard the grating of the prow of the barge on the stones below, the steps of men stumbling up the steep path, and voices mingled in confused talk. The glimmer of a couple of lanterns went bobbing in and out among the rocks and bushes. There was a little crowd of eight or ten men, and they came on carelessly, chattering and laughing. Three of them carried axes, and three others a heavy log of wood which they had picked up on their way.

"The log is better than the axes," said one; "take it in your hands this way, two of you on one side, another on the opposite side in the middle. Then swing it back and forward and let it go. The door will come down, I tell you, like a sheet of paper. But wait till I give the word, then swing hard. One—two——"

"Stop!" cried Nataline, throwing open the little window. "If you dare to touch that door, I shoot."

She thrust out the barrel of the rifle, and Mar-

cel's shot-gun appeared beside it. The old rifle was not loaded, but who knew that? Besides, both barrels of the shot-gun were full.

There was amazement in the crowd outside the tower, and consternation, and then anger.

The gang muttered, cursed, threatened, looked at the guns, and went off to their boat.

"It is murder that you will do," one of them called out; "you are a murderess, you Mademoiselle Fortin! you cause the people to die of hunger!"

"Not I," she answered; "that is as the good God pleases. No matter. The light shall burn."

The next day they put the light in order, and the following night they kindled it. They still feared another attack from the mainland, and thought it needful that one of them should be on guard all the time, though the machine itself was working beautifully and needed little watching. Nataline took the night duty; it was her own choice; she loved the charge of the lamp. Marcel was on duty through the day. They were together for three or four hours in the morning and in the evening.

It was not a desperate vigil like that affair with the broken clock-work eight years before. There was no weary turning of the crank. There was just enough work to do about the house and the tower to keep them busy. The weather was fair. The worst thing was the short supply of food. But though they were hungry, they were not starving. And Nataline still played the fife. She jested, she sang, she told long fairy stories while they sat in

the kitchen. Marcel admitted that it was not at all a bad arrangement.

On the afternoon of the twenty-seventh of April the clouds came down from the north, not a long furious tempest, but a brief, sharp storm, with considerable wind and a whirling, blinding fall of April snow. It was a bad night for boats at sea, confusing, bewildering, a night when the lighthouse had to do its best. Nataline was in the tower all night, tending the lamp, watching the clock-work. Once it seemed to her that the lantern was so covered with snow that light could not shine through. She got her long brush and scraped the snow away. It was cold work, but she gloried in it. The bright eye of the tower, winking, winking steadily through the storm, seemed to be the sign of her power in the world. It was hers. She kept it shining.

When morning came the wind was still blowing fitfully offshore, but the snow had almost ceased. Nataline stopped the clock-work, and was just climbing up into the lantern to put out the lamp, when Marcel's voice hailed her.

"Come down, Nataline, come down quick. Make haste!"

She turned and hurried out, not knowing what was to come; perhaps a message of trouble from the main-land, perhaps a new assault on the lighthouse.

As she came out of the tower, her brown eyes heavy from the night-watch, her dark face pale from the cold, she saw Marcel standing on the

rocky knoll beside the house and pointing shoreward.

She ran up beside him and looked. There, in the deep water between the island and the point, lay the supply-boat, rocking quietly on the waves.

It flashed upon her in a moment what it meant—the end of her fight, relief for the village, victory! And the light that had guided the little ship safe through the stormy night into the harbor was hers.

She turned and looked up at the lamp, still burning.

"I kept you!" she cried.

Then she turned to Marcel; the color rose quickly in her cheeks, the light sparkled in her eyes; she smiled, and held out both her hands, whispering, "Now you shall keep me!"

There was a fine wedding on the last day of April, and from that time the island took its new name—the Isle of the Wise Virgin.

A HANDFUL OF CLAY

THERE was a handful of clay in the bank of a river. It was only common clay, coarse and heavy; but it had high thoughts of its own value, and wonderful dreams of the great place which it was to fill in the world when the time came for its virtues to be discovered.

Overhead, in the spring sunshine, the trees whispered together of the glory which descended upon them when the delicate blossoms and leaves began to expand, and the forest glowed with fair, clear colors, as if the dust of thousands of rubies and emeralds were hanging, in soft clouds, above the earth.

The flowers, surprised with the joy of beauty, bent their heads to one another, as the wind caressed them, and said: "Sisters, how lovely you have become. You make the day bright."

The river, glad of new strength and rejoicing in the unison of all its waters, murmured to the shores in music, telling of its release from icy fetters, its swift flight from the snow-clad mountains, and the mighty work to which it was hurrying—the wheels of many mills to be turned, and great ships to be floated to the sea.

Waiting blindly in its bed, the clay comforted itself with lofty hopes. "My time will come," it said. "I was not made to be hidden forever. Glory and beauty and honor are coming to me in due season."

One day the clay felt itself taken from the place where it had waited so long. A flat blade of iron passed beneath it, and lifted it, and tossed it into a cart with other lumps of clay, and it was carried far away, as it seemed, over a rough and stony road. But it was not afraid, nor discouraged, for it said to itself: "This is necessary. The path to glory is always rugged. Now I am on my way to play a great part in the world."

But the hard journey was nothing compared with the tribulation and distress that came after it. The clay was put into a trough and mixed and beaten and stirred and trampled. It seemed almost unbearable. But there was consolation in the thought that something very fine and noble was certainly coming out of all this trouble. The clay felt sure that, if it could only wait long enough, a wonderful reward was in store for it.

Then it was put upon a swiftly turning wheel, and whirled around until it seemed as if it must fly into a thousand pieces. A strange power pressed it and moulded it, as it revolved, and through all the dizziness and pain it felt that it was taking a new form.

Then an unknown hand put it into an oven, and fires were kindled about it—fierce and penetrating

—hotter than all the heats of summer that had ever brooded upon the bank of the river. But through all, the clay held itself together and endured its trials, in the confidence of a great future. "Surely," it thought, "I am intended for something very splendid, since such pains are taken with me. Perhaps I am fashioned for the ornament of a temple, or a precious vase for the table of a king."

At last the baking was finished. The clay was taken from the furnace and set down upon a board, in the cool air, under the blue sky. The tribulation was passed. The reward was at hand.

Close beside the board there was a pool of water, not very deep, nor very clear, but calm enough to reflect, with impartial truth, every image that fell upon it. There, for the first time, as it was lifted from the board, the clay saw its new shape, the reward of all its patience and pain, the consummation of its hopes—a common flower-pot, straight and stiff, red and ugly. And then it felt that it was not destined for a king's house, nor for a palace of art, because it was made without glory or beauty or honor; and it murmured against the unknown maker, saying, "Why hast thou made me thus?"

Many days it passed in sullen discontent. Then it was filled with earth, and something—it knew not what—but something rough and brown and dead-looking, was thrust into the middle of the earth and covered over. The clay rebelled at this

new disgrace. "This is the worst of all that has happened to me, to be filled with dirt and rubbish. Surely I am a failure."

But presently it was set in a greenhouse, where the sunlight fell warm upon it, and water was sprinkled over it, and day by day as it waited, a change began to come to it. Something was stirring within it—a new hope. Still it was ignorant, and knew not what the new hope meant.

One day the clay was lifted again from its place, and carried into a great church. Its dream was coming true after all. It had a fine part to play in the world. Glorious music flowed over it. It was surrounded with flowers. Still it could not understand. So it whispered to another vessel of clay, like itself, close beside it, "Why have they set me here? Why do all the people look toward us?" And the other vessel answered, "Do you not know? You are carrying a royal sceptre of lilies. Their petals are white as snow, and the heart of them is like pure gold. The people look this way because the flower is the most wonderful in the world. And the root of it is in your heart."

Then the clay was content, and silently thanked its maker, because, though an earthen vessel, it held so great a treasure.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS-TREE

I

THE day before Christmas, in the year of our Lord 724. A little company of pilgrims, less than a score of men, were travelling slowly northward through the wide forests that rolled over the hills of central Germany. At the head of the band marched Winfried of England, whose name in the Roman tongue was Boniface, and whom men called the Apostle of Germany. A great preacher; a wonderful scholar; but, more than all, a daring traveller, a venturesome pilgrim, a priest of romance.

He had left his home and his fair estate in Wessex; he would not stay in the rich monastery of Nutescelle, even though they had chosen him as the abbot; he had refused a bishopric at the court of King Karl. Nothing would content him but to go out into the wild woods and preach to the heathen.

Through the forests of Hesse and Thuringia, and along the borders of Saxony, he had wandered for years, with a handful of companions, sleeping under the trees, crossing mountains and marshes, now here, now there, never satisfied with ease and comfort, always in love with hardship and danger.

What a man he was! Fair and slight, but straight as a spear and strong as an oaken staff. His face was still young; the smooth skin was bronzed by wind and sun. His gray eyes, clean and kind, flashed like fire when he spoke of his adventures, and of the evil deeds of the false priests with whom he contended.

He was now clad in a tunic of fur, with his long black robe girt high above his waist, so that it might not hinder his stride. His hunter's boots were crusted with snow. Drops of ice sparkled like jewels along the thongs that bound his legs. There were no other ornaments of his dress except the bishop's cross hanging on his breast, and the silver clasp that fastened his cloak about his neck. He carried a strong, tall staff in his hand, fashioned at the top into the form of a cross.

Close beside him, keeping step like a familiar comrade, was young Prince Gregor. Long marches through the wilderness had stretched his legs and broadened his back, and made a man of him in stature as well as in spirit. His jacket and cap were of wolf-skin, and on his shoulder he carried an axe, with broad, shining blade. He was a mighty woodsman now, and could make a spray of chips fly around him as he hewed his way through the trunk of a pine-tree.

Behind these leaders followed a pair of teamsters, guiding a rude sledge, loaded with food and the equipage of the camp, and drawn by two big, shaggy horses, blowing thick clouds of steam from

their frosty nostrils. Tiny icicles hung from the hairs on their lips. Their flanks were smoking. They sank above the fetlocks at every step in the soft snow.

Last of all came the rear guard, armed with bows and javelins. It was no child's play, in those days, to cross Europe afoot.

The weird woodland, sombre and illimitable, covered hill and vale, table-land and mountain-peak. There were wide moors where the wolves hunted in packs as if the devil drove them, and tangled thickets where the lynx and the boar made their lairs. Fierce bears lurked among the rocky passes, and had not yet learned to fear the face of man. The gloomy recesses of the forest gave shelter to inhabitants who were still more cruel and dangerous than beasts of prey—outlaws and sturdy robbers and mad were-wolves and bands of wandering pillagers.

The travellers were surrounded by an ocean of trees, so vast, so full of endless billows, that it seemed to be pressing on every side to overwhelm them. Gnarled oaks, with branches twisted and knotted as if in rage, rose in groves like tidal waves. Smooth forests of beech-trees, round and gray, swept over the knolls and slopes of land in a mighty ground-swell. But most of all, the multitude of pines and firs, innumerable and monotonous, with straight, stark trunks, and branches woven together in an unbroken flood of darkest green, crowded through the valleys and over the

hills, rising on the highest ridges into ragged crests, like the foaming edge of breakers.

Through this sea of shadows ran a narrow stream of shining whiteness—an ancient Roman road, covered with snow. It was as if some great ship had ploughed through the green ocean long ago, and left behind it a thick, smooth wake of foam. Along this open track the travellers held their way—heavily, for the drifts were deep; warily, for the hard winter had driven many packs of wolves down from the moors.

The steps of the pilgrims were noiseless; but the sledges creaked over the dry snow, and the panting of the horses throbbed through the still air. The pale-blue shadows on the western side of the road grew longer. The sun, declining through its shallow arch, dropped behind the tree-tops. Darkness followed swiftly, as if it had been a bird of prey waiting for this sign to swoop down upon the world.

"Father," said Gregor to the leader, "surely this day's march is done. It is time to rest, and eat, and sleep. If we press onward now, we cannot see our steps."

Winfried laughed. "Nay, my son Gregor," said he, "I am not minded to spare thy legs or mine, until we come farther on our way, and do what must be done this night. Draw thy belt tighter, my son, and hew me out this tree that is fallen across the road, for our camp-ground is not here."

The youth obeyed; two of the foresters sprang

to help him; and while the soft fir-wood yielded to the stroke of the axes, and the snow flew from the bending branches, Winfried turned and spoke to his followers in a cheerful voice, that refreshed them like wine.

"Courage, brothers, and forward yet a little! The moon will light us presently, and the path is plain. Well know I that the journey is weary; and my own heart wearies also for the home in England, where those I love are keeping feast this Christmas-eve. But we have work to do before we feast to-night. For this is the Yule-tide, and the heathen people of the forest are gathered at the thunder-oak of Geismar to worship their god, Thor. Strange things will be seen there, and deeds which make the soul black. But we are sent to lighten their darkness; and we will teach our kinsmen to keep a Christmas with us such as the woodland has never known. Forward, then, and stiffen up the feeble knees!"

A murmur of assent came from the men. Even the horses seemed to take fresh heart. They flattened their backs to draw the heavy loads, and blew the frost from their nostrils as they pushed ahead.

The night grew broader and less oppressive. A gate of brightness was opened secretly somewhere in the sky. Higher and higher swelled the clear moon-flood, until it poured over the eastern wall of forest into the road. A drove of wolves howled faintly in the distance, but they were receding, and

The fields around lay bare to the moon.

the sound soon died away. The stars sparkled merrily through the stringent air; the small, round moon shone like silver; little breaths of dreaming wind wandered across the pointed fir-tops, as the pilgrims toiled bravely onward, following their clew of light through a labyrinth of darkness.

After a while the road began to open out a little. There were spaces of meadow-land, fringed with alders, behind which a boisterous river ran clashing through spears of ice.

Then the road plunged again into a dense thicket, traversed it, and climbing to the left, emerged suddenly upon a glade, round and level except at the northern side, where a hillock was crowned with a huge oak-tree. It towered above the heath, a giant with contorted arms, beckoning to the host of lesser trees. "Here," cried Winfried, as his eyes flashed and his hand lifted his heavy staff, "here is the Thunder-oak; and here the cross of Christ shall break the hammer of the false god Thor."

II

Withered leaves still clung to the branches of the oak: torn and faded banners of the departed summer. The bright crimson of autumn had long since disappeared, bleached away by the storms and the cold. But to-night these tattered remnants of glory were red again: ancient blood-stains against the

dark-blue sky. For an immense fire had been kindled in front of the tree. Tongues of ruddy flame, fountains of ruby sparks, ascended through the spreading limbs and flung a fierce illumination upward and around. The pale, pure moonlight that bathed the surrounding forests was quenched and eclipsed here. Not a beam of it sifted through the branches of the oak. It stood like a pillar of cloud between the still light of heaven and the crackling, flashing fire of earth.

But the fire itself was invisible to Winfried and his companions. A great throng of people were gathered around it in a half-circle, their backs to the open glade, their faces toward the oak. Seen against that glowing background, it was but the silhouette of a crowd, vague, black, formless, mysterious.

The travellers paused for a moment at the edge of the thicket, and took counsel together.

"It is the assembly of the tribe," said one of the foresters, "the great night of the council. I heard of it three days ago, as we passed through one of the villages. All who swear by the old gods have been summoned. They will sacrifice a steed to the god of war, and drink blood, and eat horse-flesh to make them strong. It will be at the peril of our lives if we approach them. At least we must hide the cross, if we would escape death."

"Hide me no cross," cried Winfried, lifting his staff, "for I have come to show it, and to make these blind folk see its power. There is more to

be done here to-night than the slaying of a steed, and a greater evil to be stayed than the shameful eating of meat sacrificed to idols. I have seen it in a dream. Here the cross must stand and be our rede."

At his command the sledge was left in the border of the wood, with two of the men to guard it, and the rest of the company moved forward across the open ground. They approached unnoticed, for all the multitude were looking intently toward the fire at the foot of the oak.

Then Winfried's voice rang out, "Hail, ye sons of the forest! A stranger claims the warmth of your fire in the winter night."

Swiftly, and as with a single motion, a thousand eyes were bent upon the speaker. The semicircle opened silently in the middle; Winfried entered with his followers; it closed again behind them.

Then, as they looked round the curving ranks, they saw that the hue of the assemblage was not black, but white—dazzling, radiant, solemn. White, the robes of the women clustered together at the points of the wide crescent; white, the glittering byrnies of the warriors standing in close ranks; white, the fur mantles of the aged men who held the central place in the circle; white, with the shimmer of silver ornaments and the purity of lamb's-wool, the raiment of a little group of children who stood close by the fire; white, with awe and fear, the faces of all who looked at them; and over all the flickering, dancing radiance of the

flames played and glimmered like a faint, vanishing tinge of blood on snow.

The only figure untouched by the glow was the old priest, Hunrad, with his long, spectral robe, flowing hair and beard, and dead-pale face, who stood with his back to the fire and advanced slowly to meet the strangers.

"Who are you? Whence come you, and what seek you here?"

"Your kinsman am I, of the German brotherhood," answered Winfried, "and from England, beyond the sea, have I come to bring you a greeting from that land, and a message from the All-Father, whose servant I am."

"Welcome, then," said Hunrad, "welcome, kinsman, and be silent; for what passes here is too high to wait, and must be done before the moon crosses the middle heaven, unless, indeed, thou hast some sign or token from the gods. Canst thou work miracles?"

The question came sharply, as if a sudden gleam of hope had flashed through the tangle of the old priest's mind. But Winfried's voice sank lower and a cloud of disappointment passed over his face as he replied: "Nay, miracles have I never wrought, though I have heard of many; but the All-Father has given no power to my hands save such as belongs to common man."

"Stand still, then, thou common man," said Hunrad scornfully, "and behold what the gods have called us hither to do. This night is the

death-night of the sun-god, Baldur the Beautiful, beloved of gods and men. This night is the hour of darkness and the power of winter, of sacrifice and mighty fear. This night the great Thor, the god of thunder and war, to whom this oak is sacred, is grieved for the death of Baldur, and angry with this people because they have forsaken his worship. Long is it since an offering has been laid upon his altar, long since the roots of his holy tree have been fed with blood. Therefore its leaves have withered before the time, and its boughs are heavy with death. Therefore the Slavs and the Wends have beaten us in battle. Therefore the harvests have failed, and the wolf-hordes have ravaged the folds, and the strength has departed from the bow, and the wood of the spear has broken, and the wild boar has slain the huntsman. Therefore the plague has fallen on our dwellings, and the dead are more than the living in all our villages. Answer me, ye people, are not these things true?"

A hoarse sound of approval ran through the circle. A chant, in which the voices of the men and women blended, like the shrill wind in the pine-trees above the rumbling thunder of a waterfall, rose and fell in rude cadences.

O Thor, the Thunderer,
Mighty and merciless,
Spare us from smiting!
Heave not thy hammer,
Angry, against us;

Plague not thy people.
Take from our treasure
Richest of ransom.
Silver we send thee,
Jewels and javelins,
Goodliest garments,
All our possessions,
Priceless, we proffer.
Sheep will we slaughter,
Steeds will we sacrifice;
Bright blood shall bathe thee,
O tree of Thunder,
Life-floods shall lave thee,
Strong wood of wonder.
Mighty, have mercy,
Smite us no more,
Spare us and save us,
Spare us, Thor! Thor!

With two great shouts the song ended, and a stillness followed so intense that the crackling of the fire was heard distinctly. The old priest stood silent for a moment. His shaggy brows swept down over his eyes like ashes quenching flame. Then he lifted his face and spoke.

"None of these things will please the god. More costly is the offering that shall cleanse your sin, more precious the crimson dew that shall send new life into this holy tree of blood. Thor claims your dearest and your noblest gift."

Hunrad moved nearer to the group of children who stood watching the fire and the swarms of

spark-serpents darting upward. They had heeded none of the priest's words, and did not notice now that he approached them, so eager were they to see which fiery snake would go highest among the oak branches. Foremost among them, and most intent on the pretty game, was a boy like a sunbeam, slender and quick, with blithe brown eyes and laughing lips. The priest's hand was laid upon his shoulder. The boy turned and looked up in his face.

"Here," said the old man, with his voice vibrating as when a thick rope is strained by a ship swinging from her moorings, "here is the chosen one, the eldest son of the chief, the darling of the people. Hearken, Bernhard, wilt thou go to Valhalla, where the heroes dwell with the gods, to bear a message to Thor?"

The boy answered, swift and clear:

"Yes, priest, I will go if my father bids me. Is it far away? Shall I run quickly? Must I take my bow and arrows for the wolves?"

The boy's father, the chieftain Gundhar, standing among his bearded warriors, drew his breath deep, and leaned so heavily on the handle of his spear that the wood cracked. And his wife, Irma, bending forward from the ranks of women, pushed the golden hair from her forehead with one hand. The other dragged at the silver chain about her neck until the rough links pierced her flesh, and the red drops fell unheeded on her breast.

A sigh passed through the crowd, like the mur-

mur of the forest before the storm breaks. Yet no one spoke save Hunrad:

"Yes, my prince, both bow and spear shalt thou have, for the way is long, and thou art a brave huntsman. But in darkness thou must journey for a little space, and with eyes blindfolded. Fearest thou?"

"Naught fear I," said the boy, "neither darkness, nor the great bear, nor the were-wolf. For I am Gundhar's son, and the defender of my folk."

Then the priest led the child in his raiment of lamb's-wool to a broad stone in front of the fire. He gave him his little bow tipped with silver, and his spear with shining head of steel. He bound the child's eyes with a white cloth, and bade him kneel beside the stone with his face to the east. Unconsciously the wide arc of spectators drew inward toward the centre. Winfried moved noiselessly until he stood close behind the priest.

The old man stooped to lift a black hammer of stone from the ground—the sacred hammer of the god Thor. Summoning all the strength of his withered arms, he swung it high in the air. It poised for an instant above the child's fair head—then turned to fall.

One keen cry shrilled out from where the women stood: "Me! take me! not Bernhard!"

The flight of the mother toward her child was swift as the falcon's swoop. But swifter still was the hand of the deliverer.

Winfried's heavy staff thrust mightily against the

hammer's handle as it fell. Sideways it glanced from the old man's grasp, and the black stone, striking on the altar's edge, split in twain. A shout of awe and joy rolled along the living circle. The branches of the oak shivered. The flames leaped higher. As the shout died away the people saw the lady Irma, with her arms clasped round her child, and above them, on the altar-stone, Winfried, his face shining like the face of an angel.

III

A swift mountain-flood rolling down its channel; a huge rock tumbling from the hill-side and falling in mid-stream: the baffled waters broken and confused, pausing in their flow, dash high against the rock, foaming and murmuring, with divided impulse, uncertain whether to turn to the right or the left.

Even so Winfried's bold deed fell into the midst of the thoughts and passions of the council. They were at a standstill. Anger and wonder, reverence and joy and confusion surged through the crowd. They knew not which way to move: to resent the intrusion of the stranger as an insult to their gods, or to welcome him as the rescuer of their prince.

The old priest crouched by the altar, silent. Conflicting counsels troubled the air. Let the sacrifice go forward; the gods must be appeased. Nay, the boy must not die; bring the chieftain's best horse

and slay it in his stead; it will be enough; the holy tree loves the blood of horses. Not so, there is a better counsel yet; seize the stranger whom the gods have led hither as a victim and make his life pay the forfeit of his daring.

The withered leaves on the oak rustled and whispered overhead. The fire flared and sank again. The angry voices clashed against each other and fell like opposing waves. Then the chieftain Gundhar struck the earth with his spear and gave his decision.

"All have spoken, but none are agreed. There is no voice of the council. Keep silence now, and let the stranger speak. His words shall give us judgment, whether he is to live or to die."

Winfried lifted himself high upon the altar, drew a roll of parchment from his bosom, and began to read.

"A letter from the great Bishop of Rome, who sits on a golden throne, to the people of the forest, Hessians and Thuringians, Franks and Saxons."

A murmur of awe ran through the crowd.

Winfried went on to read the letter, translating it into the speech of the people.

"We have sent unto you our Brother Boniface, and appointed him your bishop, that he may teach you the only true faith, and baptize you, and lead you back from the ways of error to the path of salvation. Hearken to him in all things like a father. Bow your hearts to his teaching. He comes not for earthly gain, but for the gain of your

souls. Depart from evil works. Worship not the false gods, for they are devils. Offer no more bloody sacrifices, nor eat the flesh of horses, but do as our Brother Boniface commands you. Build a house for him that he may dwell among you, and a church where you may offer your prayers to the only living God, the Almighty King of Heaven."

It was a splendid message: proud, strong, peaceful, loving. The dignity of the words imposed mightily upon the hearts of the people. They were quieted as men who have listened to a lofty strain of music.

"Tell us, then," said Gundhar, "what is the word that thou bringest to us from the Almighty? What is thy counsel for the tribes of the woodland on this night of sacrifice?"

"This is the word, and this is the counsel," answered Winfried. "Not a drop of blood shall fall to-night, save that which pity has drawn from the breast of your princess, in love for her child. Not a life shall be blotted out in the darkness to-night; but the great shadow of the tree which hides you from the light of heaven shall be swept away. For this is the birthnight of the white Christ, son of the All-Father, and Saviour of mankind. Since He has come to earth the bloody sacrifice must cease. The dark Thor, on whom you vainly call, is dead. His power in the world is broken. Will you serve a helpless god? See, my brothers, you call this tree his oak. Does he dwell here? Does he protect it?"

A troubled voice of assent rose from the throng. The people stirred uneasily. Women covered their eyes. Hunrad lifted his head and muttered hoarsely, "Thor! take vengeance! Thor!"

Winfried beckoned to Gregor. "Bring the axes, thine and one for me. Now, young woodsman, show thy craft! The king-tree of the forest must fall, and swiftly, or all is lost!"

The two men took their places facing each other, one on each side of the oak. Their cloaks were flung aside, their heads bare. Carefully they felt the ground with their feet, seeking a firm grip of the earth. Firmly they grasped the axe-helves and swung the shining blades.

"Tree-god!" cried Winfried, "art thou angry? Thus we smite thee!"

"Tree-god!" answered Gregor, "art thou mighty? Thus we fight thee!"

Clang! clang! the alternate strokes beat time upon the hard, ringing wood. The axe-heads glittered in their rhythmic flight, like fierce eagles circling about their quarry.

The broad flakes of wood flew from the deepening gashes in the sides of the oak. The huge trunk quivered. There was a shuddering in the branches. Then the great wonder of Winfried's life came to pass.

Out of the stillness of the winter night a mighty rushing noise sounded overhead.

Was it the ancient gods on their white battle-steeds, with their black hounds of wrath and their

arrows of lightning, sweeping through the air to destroy their foes?

A strong, whirling wind passed over the tree-tops. It gripped the oak by its branches and tore it from the roots. Backward it fell, like a ruined tower, groaning and crashing as it split asunder in four great pieces.

Winfried let his axe drop, and bowed his head for a moment in the presence of almighty power.

Then he turned to the people: "Here is the timber," he cried, "already felled and split for your new building. On this spot shall rise a chapel to the true God and his servant St. Peter.

"And here," said he, as his eyes fell on a young fir-tree, standing straight and green, with its top pointing toward the stars, amid the divided ruins of the fallen oak, "here is the living tree, with no stain of blood upon it, that shall be the sign of your new worship. See how it points to the sky. Call it the tree of the Christ-child. Take it up and carry it to the chieftain's hall. You shall go no more into the shadows of the forest to keep your feasts with secret rites of shame. You shall keep them at home, with laughter and songs and rites of love. The thunder-oak has fallen, and I think the day is coming when there shall not be a home in all Germany where the children are not gathered around the green fir-tree to rejoice in the birthnight of Christ."

So they took the little fir from its place, and carried it in joyous procession to the edge of the

glade, and laid it on the sledge. The horses tossed their heads and drew their load bravely, as if the new burden had made it lighter.

When they came to the house of Gundhar, he bade them throw open the doors of the hall and set the tree in the midst of it. They kindled lights among the branches until it seemed to be tangled full of fire-flies. The children encircled it, wondering, and the sweet odor of the balsam filled the house.

Then Winfried stood beside the chair of Gundhar, on the daïs at the end of the hall, and told the story of Bethlehem; of the babe in the manger, of the shepherds on the hills, of the host of angels and their midnight song. All the people listened, charmed into stillness.

But the boy Bernhard, on Irma's knee, folded in her soft arms, grew restless as the story lengthened, and began to prattle softly at his mother's ear.

"Mother," whispered the child, "why did you cry out so loud when the priest was going to send me to Valhalla?"

"Oh, hush, my child," answered the mother, and pressed him closer to her side.

"Mother," whispered the boy again, laying his finger on the stains upon her breast, "see, your dress is red! What are these stains? Did someone hurt you?"

The mother closed his mouth with a kiss. "Dear, be still, and listen!"

The boy obeyed. His eyes were heavy with sleep. But he heard the last words of Winfried as he spoke of the angelic messengers, flying over the hills of Judea and singing as they flew. The child wondered and dreamed and listened. Suddenly his face grew bright. He put his lips close to Irma's cheek again.

"Oh, mother!" he whispered very low, "do not speak. Do you hear them? Those angels have come back again. They are singing now behind the tree."

And some say that it was true; but some say that it was the pilgrims whom the child heard, singing their Christmas carol.

PART IV

BITS OF BLUE-SKY PHILOSOPHY

THE ARROW

LIFE is an arrow—therefore you must know
What mark to aim at, how to use the bow—
Then draw it to the head, and let it go!

FOUR THINGS

FOUR things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true:
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow-men sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

LIFE

LET me but live my life from year to year,
With forward face and unreluctant soul;
Not hurrying to, nor turning from, the goal;
Not mourning for the things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart, that pays its toll
To Youth and Age, and travels on with cheer.

So let the way wind up the hill or down,
O'er rough or smooth, the journey will be joy:
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,
New friendship, high adventure, and a crown,
My heart will keep the courage of the quest,
And hope the road's last turn will be the best.

WORK

LET me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
Of all who live, I am the one by whom
This work can best be done in the right way."

Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
Then shall I cheerful greet the laboring hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because I know for me my work is best.

THE GENTLE LIFE[1]

"I WILL give you four choice rules for the attainment of that unhastened quietude of mind whereof we did lately discourse.

"First.—You shall learn to desire nothing in the world so much but that you can be happy without it.

"Second.—You shall seek that which you desire only by such means as are fair and lawful, and this will leave you without bitterness toward men or shame before God.

"Third.—You shall take pleasure in the time while you are seeking, even though you obtain not immediately that which you seek; for the purpose of a journey is not only to arrive at the goal, but also to find enjoyment by the way.

"Fourth.—When you attain that which you have desired, you shall think more of the kindness of your fortune than of the greatness of your skill. This will make you grateful, and ready to share with others that which Providence hath bestowed upon you; and truly this is both reasonable and profitable, for it is but little that any of us would catch in this world were not our luck better than our deserts."

* * * * * *

"Trust me, Scholar, it is the part of wisdom to spend little of your time upon the things that vex

[1] The author puts these words into the mouth of Izaak Walton, who appears to him one day in his dreams.

and anger you, and much of your time upon the things that bring you quietness and confidence and good cheer. A friend made is better than an enemy punished. There is more of God in the peaceable beauty of this little wood-violet than in all the angry disputations of the sects. We are nearer heaven when we listen to the birds than when we quarrel with our fellow-men. I am sure that none can enter into the spirit of Christ, His evangel, save those who willingly follow His invitation when He says, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a lonely place, and rest a while.' For since His blessed kingdom was first established in the green fields, by the lakeside, with humble fishermen for its subjects, the easiest way into it hath ever been through the wicket-gate of a lowly and grateful fellowship with Nature. He that feels not the beauty and blessedness and peace of the woods and meadows that God hath bedecked with flowers for him even while he is yet a sinner, how shall he learn to enjoy the unfading bloom of the celestial country if he ever become a saint?

"No, no, sir, he that departeth out of this world without perceiving that it is fair and full of innocent sweetness hath done little honor to the every-day miracles of divine beneficence; and though by mercy he may obtain an entrance to heaven, it will be a strange place to him; and though he have studied all that is written in men's books of divinity, yet because he hath left the book of Nature unturned, he will have much to learn and much to forget. Do you think that to be blind to the beauties

of earth prepareth the heart to behold the glories of heaven? Nay, Scholar, I know that you are not of that opinion. But I can tell you another thing which perhaps you knew not. The heart that is blest with the glories of heaven ceaseth not to remember and to love the beauties of this world. And of this love I am certain, because I feel it, and glad because it is a great blessing.

"There are two sorts of seeds sown in our remembrance by what we call the hand of fortune, the fruits of which do not wither, but grow sweeter forever and ever. The first is the seed of innocent pleasures, received in gratitude and enjoyed with good companions, of which pleasures we never grow weary of thinking, because they have enriched our hearts. The second is the seed of pure and gentle sorrows, borne in submission and with faithful love, and these also we never forget, but we come to cherish them with gladness instead of grief, because we see them changed into everlasting joys. And how this may be I cannot tell you now, for you would not understand me. But that it is so, believe me: for if you believe, you shall one day see it yourself."

STORY OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE FROM A CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

STORY OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE FROM A CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW

My father was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, on November 10, 1852; but when he was very young the family moved to Brooklyn, and it was there that most of his boyhood was spent. From the first his relationship with his father was a particularly beautiful one, for besides the natural trust and reverence, there grew up the closest kind of a friendship. It was as comrades that they went off for their day's holiday, escaping from the city and its flag pavements and brownstone fronts and getting out into the fresh country air, to walk through the woods and watch the leaves turn red and gold and brown and drop to the ground, or to skate in the winter, or to listen for the song of the first returning bluebird in the spring. It was under the wise and tender guidance of his father that the boy's instinctive love of nature grew and developed. The stages of this growth are seen in the chapter entitled "A Boy and a Rod."

Boys went to college earlier in those days than they do now, and my father, who had prepared at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, was ready to enter Princeton at the age of sixteen. Before he went to college he had tried his hand at writing a

little. During his college course he became deeply interested in it, and took the Clio Hall prizes for essays and speeches, besides writing along other lines. Thus his enthusiasm for literature was increasing all the time, and from the first the idea of writing was uppermost in his mind. He was Junior orator in 1872, and at graduation in 1873 his classmates elected him for a class-day speaker. He also received honors from the faculty in belles-lettres and the English Salutatory in recognition of his general scholarship, besides the class of 1859 Prize in English Literature. Through all his course he was a leading man in the classroom, gymnasium, and all class and college affairs.

After teaching for a year in Brooklyn he entered Princeton Theological Seminary, and graduated in 1877. He spent the following year studying at the University of Berlin and in travel, and after being ordained in 1879 he was called to the United Congregational Church at Newport, R. I. In 1881 he married my mother, and a few years later was called to the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York, where he gave seventeen years of the hardest and most untiring labor to a work which did not end with his own congregation or the city itself, but touched thousands of people all over the country. But these years of his life were only a step aside to give a helping hand to two churches which were fast running down, and through it all he felt that his real work was literature, and it was in that field that his best work could be done, though the rush

of city life at that time gave him very little chance to do it.

So we were city children, but the woods were our inheritance and fishing became our favorite sport. Our earliest recollections of my father are in connection with fishing or camping expeditions. For when work pressed too heavily and his health showed signs of too much wear and tear, he would take a few days in the spring and spend them catching the first trout of the season out of the Swiftwater, a little river in the Alleghany Mountains in Pennsylvania. When he was away we always thought that he had "gone fishing," and our earliest ambition was to go with him. Somehow, the fact that I was a girl never seemed to make any difference in my castles in the air, and all of us, boys and girls alike, grew up with the idea that to be like father was the highest possible attainment.

As soon as we were able to read we read his stories of camping that came out in the magazines. The article on "Ampersand" was the first and appeared in *Harper's Magazine* in 1885. But we were too young then, of course, to appreciate them, and I am afraid we preferred the story of "The Little Girl in the Well" and "Tommy Lizard and Frankie Frog," and other wonderful tales that he invented and told us between supper and bedtime.

Every Sunday we sat all in a row up in the second pew in the big church and heard him preach. Then in the afternoon, or on stormy Sundays, we put the chairs in the nursery in rows and one of us

would preach while the others were congregation or choir. This was the nearest we ever came to appreciating the sermons that were all the time being made down in the study just below us. During this time he published "The Reality of Religion, "The Story of the Psalms," "God and Little Children," and "The Poetry of Tennyson," besides many magazine articles. The sermons we liked best, though, were the Christmas sermons, which were always stories, and which were afterward published. Among them were "The Other Wise Man," "The Lost Word," and "The First Christmas-Tree."

When we saw his books coming out we were fired with the ambition to publish books too, so we had a "Book Company" which he encouraged by his patronage. We wrote stories, laboriously printed them with pen and ink, illustrated them in water-colors, and bound them in cardboard and colored paper. We soon had quite a library, with contributions from all the family, and in all this my father was our wisest friend and critic.

So the making of books was a reality to us, and we were interested not only in the writing, but in the illustrations and binding. I remember one afternoon my father had gone out in a hurry, leaving his study in great disorder. I was always more fond of the study than of any room in the house, probably because entrance was forbidden most of the time when he was working; so taking advantage of his absence, I slid in and found the floor covered with photographs and prints and piles of

books. It looked like a veritable workshop, and the disorder delighted my heart; so I spent the afternoon there, and finally persuaded myself that there would be nothing wrong in taking one small photograph of the Madonna and child, which I especially liked, if I put it back soon. I remember what a time I had returning it to its place the next day, and then with what interest, many months later, I saw the picture reproduced on one of the pages of the "Christ Child in Art" which came out in 1894. I really felt that I had had a part in the making of that book.

Of the making of rhymes, too, there was no end. Sometimes at the dinner-table my father would sit perfectly quiet for ten minutes, apparently wrapped in thought, while we chattered and discussed the doings of the morning or planned for the afternoon; and then if we stopped for a moment and looked at him we would see a smile dawning on his face, and a new-made nonsense rhyme was recited much to our delight. We often tried to persuade him to write a book for children, but although he seemed to have plenty of time to make it up, he was always too busy to write it down.

The best times of all, though, were the summer months, when we left the hot, dusty city and went down to the little white cottage on the south shore of Long Island. Here he first taught us the gentle art of fishing, and how well I remember the mornings he spent showing us how to catch the minnows for bait in a mosquito-net (for catching the bait

was always part of the game), and then how he stood with us for hours on the high drawbridge across the channel, showing us the easy little twitch of the wrist that hooks the fish, and how to take him off the hook and save the bait. They were only young bluefish, or little "snappers," as we called them, and seldom more than eight inches long, but we were as proud as though they were salmon. Real trout we had never caught, though we had often jumped up from the supper-table and run to meet him when he came in after dark with his basket full of wet, shiny, speckled ones. Then how exciting it was to weigh the biggest one and hear about the still *bigger* one that got away. That was always a good reason for going back the next day, and sometimes, if we had been very good, he would take one or two of us up under the bridge, and up the narrow, winding stream, till we came to where the branches interlaced overhead and the boat would go no farther. There he left us at the little rustic bridge and waded up the stream above, while we sat breathless to hear his halloo, which meant he was coming back, and to find out what luck he had had in those mysterious mazes above the bridge.

Those were the happiest days of our summer, and, as my father says, it was the stream which made them so.

But these were only day's trips, and I longed for real camping out. Every fall my father went hundreds of miles away up to Canada where there were real bears and wolves in the woods and where you

travelled for days without seeing a house or a person. I had often heard him tell his experiences much as they are now recorded in "Camping Out" in this book. Especially did we become interested in the French guides, whose letters to him I read eagerly, though slowly, for they were written in French.

Finally, to my earnest entreaties, there came a sort of half promise that I might go some time when I was bigger and stronger, but it seemed so indefinite that I quite despaired, and great was my surprise and joy one day when my father asked me if I would like to go camping that very day. The tent and the great heavy blankets and rubber sheets were taken out of their canvas wrapping where they were lying waiting for the fall and Canada. My father put on his corduroys and homespun and his old weather-stained gray felt hat, with the flies stuck all around the band, and I donned my oldest sailor suit, and with a few pots and pans, a small supply of provisions which the family helped us get together, and our two fishing-rods, we were ready for the start. We took the long trip (about a mile) in an old flat-bottomed row-boat, and my mother and little brothers came with us to see us settled. Our camping ground was in a pine grove near a small inlet to the salt-water bay on which our cottage faced, so that, although the stream was blocked with weeds and stumps, the easiest way to get there was by water. We reached the place about four in the afternoon, moored the

boat, and carried the tent and provisions up a little hill to the place my father had chosen. It seemed miles and miles from home, and very wild. We had nothing for supper, and I remember wondering whether my father would shoot some wild animal or whether we would catch some fish. The latter course was chosen, much to my disappointment, and after the tent was pitched, the provisions unpacked, and my mother and brothers had left us all alone, we started out with rods and tackle to catch our supper. Fortunately the fish were biting well, and with my rising appetite they came more and more frequently, until we had a basketful. Then we had to stop by the stream to prepare them for the pan, so it was almost dark when we threaded our way back through the deep forest of pines to the little white tent. But we soon built the fire and made things look more cheerful. How good the fish looked as they sizzled away over the glowing fire, and they tasted even better, eaten right out of the same pan they were cooked in. That was one of the best suppers I ever recall eating, and surely half the pleasure came from the comradeship of a father who shared and sympathized with my thoughts and entered into my fun with the spirits of a boy.

It was an experience which I shall never forget, and which, like most of the delightful "first" things I have done, I shall always associate with my father. For he was our guide in everything; and besides the fishing trips, there were long Sunday

afternoon walks through the woods and a growing acquaintance with the songs of the birds and with the wild flowers. He made us listen for the first notes of the bluebird in spring and to the "Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer" of the song sparrows that sang in the lilac hedge around our cottage. It was there that he wrote "The Song Sparrow" and a good many of the poems that came out later in a book called "The Builders and Other Poems." But my first realization that my father was a poet came when my two brothers and myself were brought down here to Princeton in 1896 to hear him read the ode at the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Princeton College. How proud we felt to be the only children in that grave assembly of gowned and hooded scholars, and how fine it was to see our own father standing there on the platform and reciting the ode for his Alma Mater, the college we had cheered for and whose colors we had worn through defeat or victory every spring and fall. To be sure we were interested in Harvard too, because he had often been elected preacher to the university there, and in Yale, because he had been Lyman Beecher Lecturer there, and in other colleges where he had received academic honors; but we were ever loyal to Princeton, where he and our grandfather and our great-grandfather had been students.

Our Dutch ancestry was brought to our minds the year he was President of the Holland Society, and our Presbyterianism emphasized when he be-

came Moderator of the General Assembly of that church and brought home a fine white ivory gavel which some Alaskan mission church had sent to him and which he now keeps on one of the library bookcases. Thus in all his work, as well as in his fishing, we have followed him, and he takes us into his plans and tells us as much as we can understand of what he is doing.

In 1900 he was called to be the first occupant of the Murray chair of English Literature in Princeton University, and we now have, what we have always wanted, a home in the country. Here, though he has left the strain and rush of city life, he seems busier than ever, for he still preaches every Sunday, usually at university and college chapels, and his calendar is always filled with lecture engagements all over the country. Preacher, poet, lecturer—his professions are many, though his aim is one, to lift the world up and make it a better, happier one than he found it.

But with all this work there is a shelf in the library at Avalon on which the line of books is steadily increasing. That is the shelf where my father's books, each one of which he has especially bound and gives to my mother, are kept. Two of the latest additions to this shelf are the books of short stories, "The Ruling Passion" and "The Blue Flower," and I think we have been more interested in the making of these two than in any others. For we have seen the stories grow and have known many of the characters that he has so faithfully drawn.

The scenes of some are laid in places that we are very familiar with and many of the incidents have taken place before our eyes. My father keeps a small black leather note-book, one that would fit in a jacket pocket. When a story comes to him he jots down a word or two—a phrase, or something that suggests what is in his mind and would call up the same train of thought—then puts the note-book away till he has had time to think the story out in full, or, more often, until he has time to write it down. Sometimes it is only a catchword, sometimes half a page, but he always seems to have two or three stories ahead of him waiting to be written.

About three summers ago there were so many stories on this waiting-list that my father knew they would give him no peace of mind until written down in black and white. We were spending that summer on an island off the coast of Massachusetts, and our little cottage was in the midst of all the merry-making, near the ocean, and facing a field where all sizes of boys played base-ball every afternoon. It was not at all an atmosphere for writing, so my father, on one of his walks of discovery to the middle of the island, found an old deserted farm-house standing back from the road on a little rise of ground. There were apple-trees around it and a grape-vine straggling over the trellised porch, and from the window of what once was probably the sitting-room there was a tiny glimpse of the blue sea far away in the distance. No discordant sounds

reached this quiet spot, and here my father spent a good part of the summer writing a great many of the stories in "The Blue Flower." He would go out to his farm-house study every morning, returning in body, though not in spirit, to lunch, and then go out again to work for the rest of the afternoon. As soon as a story was finished, we would gather, after supper, around the lamp and he would read it to us. What a delight it was to recognize some of our old friends or familiar places, or to make the acquaintance of new and even better ones. We were sorry when the stories were all finished and the book had gone to the publisher.

My father's latest book is "Music, and Other Poems," and most of these were written here in his study at Avalon, though some he wrote down in Augusta, Ga., where he spent part of last winter. The "Ode to Music" he was almost two years in writing, taking up, of course, other things in the mean time. Several days ago the following came to my father from James Whitcomb Riley:

> Music! yea, and the airs you play—
> Out of the faintest Far-away
> And the sweetest, too; and the dearest here,
> With its quavering voice but its bravest cheer—
> The prayer that aches to be all expressed—
> The kiss of love at its tenderest.
> Music—music with glad heart-throbs
> Within it; and music with tears and sobs
> Shaking it, as the startled soul
> Is shaken at shriek of the fife and roll

Of the drums ;—then as suddenly lulled again
By the whisper and lisp of the summer rain.
Mist of melodies, fragrance fine—
The bird-song-flicked from the eglantine
With the dews where the springing bramble throws
A rarer drench on its ripest rose,
And the wingèd song soars up and sinks
To a dove's dim coo by the river brinks,
Where the ripple's voice still laughs along
Its glittering path of light and song.
Music, O poet, and all your own
By right of capture, and that alone—
For in it we hear the harmony
Born of the earth and the air and the sea,
And over and under it, and all through,
We catch the chime of the Anthem, too.

But in spite of his many duties he still finds time to fish, and since we have lived here he has taken me on a real camping trip in Canada and taught me to catch real salmon, as well as showing me the scenes of a good many of his stories in "The Ruling Passion." So now I know what real fisherman's luck is, for though "we sometimes caught plenty and sometimes few, we never came back without a good catch of happiness," and my father has taught me the real meaning of the last stanza of "The Angler's Reveille":

Then come, my friend, forget your foes and leave your fears behind,
And wander out to try your luck with cheerful, quiet mind ;

For be your fortune great or small, you'll take what God may
give,
And through the day your heart shall say,
'Tis luck enough to live.

BROOKE VAN DYKE.

Avalon, Princeton, N. J.,
January 21, 1905.

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